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ABSTRACT

All secondary school assistant principals in Massachusetts were surveyed to assess the relationships between their backgrounds, training, and values and their concepts of, preparedness for, and processes for dealing with conflict situations. Data were collected through questionnaires and through the completion by the 122 survey respondents of the Sexton-Bowerman conflict handling inventory. Statistical analysis of the data revealed that the assistant principals exhibited a fairly high level of willingness to intervene in conflict situations but engaged in a wide variety of intervention styles when actually intervening. Age and experience were found not to correlate with tendencies toward either the authoritarian or the eqalitarian end of the intervention style continuum. The data also failed to support the hypothesis that a direct relationship exists between willingness to intervene and intervention style. The author notes that the absence of adequate instruments restricted the research effort and urges both the development of better instruments and the extension of the research. The document includes a lengthy bibliography and appendices presenting the instruments used and tabular and graphic presentations of the study's major findings. (Author/PGD)

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BOSTON COLLEGE
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PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR PROGRAM

( PSAP III )

# AN INVESTIGATIVE ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT THEORY AND PRACTICE AS EXAMINED FROM THE OPERATIVE POSITION OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPALSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this dissertation were :

(1) to conduct research into the nature of conflict as seen in general educational terms as well as in specific applications involving secondary school settings;

(2) to conduct, by means of assessment instruments, a two-part survey of all assistant principals in Massachusetts listed by the Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Administrators; the survey was conducted for the following purposes:

(a) to assess the background, training, and opinions of these administrators regarding conflict concepts, procedures, and situations;

(b) to determine by means of the Sexton-Bowerman rating scale the intervention style of the respondents to a series of case conflict analogies.

Statistically, 72% of all registered assistant principals in the state responded to the survey. Over 90% of the group responding listed ages of 35 or higher. Within this category, 31 (25.4%) were over 50 while 83 (68%) were between 35 and 50. Only 8 (6.0%) respondents were under 35 years of age.

Fully 100% of the assistant principals possessed a Master's degree or higher, with 83 (68%) in the designation of Master's plus credit hours. Even with this advanced amount of education already earned, 85 (70%) indicated that they would now be willing to elect some form of instruction in conflict management. This compares significantly with an overall attitude of dissatisfaction with professional training in conflict management which lists 85 (70%) of the assistant principals as determining their preparation to be lacking. To restate a general conclusion: 2 out of 3 administrators regard their formal instruction in conflict management to be inadequate.

Further, if the opportunity were presented to an assistant principal to design a graduate program in educational administration, 108 (89%) reported that they would make such a course a requirement. This appears to clearly indicate an attitude of necessity of instruction in this area.

The lack of scientific research tools in conflict management contributed to the difficulty of generalizing results supporting or rejecting the stated hypotheses. With the exception of the Sexton-Bowerman scale no instrument was in existence which treated the unique conflict situations encountered in educational administration. Because of the dearth of statistical data supporting this measure, an item analysis of internal consistency was conducted by the researcher. The analysis of variance was reported in Chapter Four. Reliability Alpha ratios were concluded to be sufficient for all of the willingness (A) scales. However, the intervention scales (B), which were the subject of major hypotheses, list reliability ratios which barely meet acceptability standards.

Tables 13-20 present an analysis of frequency dispersions in all Sexton-Bowerman scales. A generalization that may be considered from these measures is that while assistant principals register a fairly high level of willingness to intervene (all items are 4+ on the Likert-type scale of 1-5), the actual intervention style is sporadic. Various conflict situations appear to trigger differing response patterns which generally gravitate to the authoritarian end of the continuum. Overall, however, intervention reaction appears to replicate a recognized psychological construct which demonstrates an averaging of behavioral activity around a normal curve concept (Kerlinger, 1978).

Thus, an additional conclusion may be drawn that conflict management behavior tends to regress to a middle stage (as represented by Sexton-Bowerman) between the authoritarian and egalitarian mode of resolution.

Regarding hypotheses H1.1 and H1.2, an intra-cell set of matrices was prepared separately for age, experience, and adequacy of conflict management training. Since significant findings were not uncovered categorically (i.e., age breakdown, individual levels of experience, and the positive/negative confidence level regarding training), a compressed cross-tabulation was undertaken in order to analyze totals. This was presented in Table 21. Separate Chi Square values with attendant significances were tabulated along with Pearson's correlations, also with significances. While some entries reported significant readings on an individual basis, there was little to suggest categorically that the overall data analysis supported the hypotheses. In other words, the dispersion pattern which ranged over the continuum style methodology and over separate conflict issues appeared to be too diverse in order to specify conclusions regarding distinct categories of age, experience, and educational confidence.

Hypothesis 2, by virtue of the Critical Ratio subtests, produced large levels of significance of difference -- with the exception of the Power B cell. Since the hypothesis called for the establishing of a direct ratio between willingness to intervene as contrasted with actual intervention style, the hypothesis required rejection. Again, future research may be undertaken in an attempt to investigate possible causal patterns between an expressed tendency to take action with full responsibility and a mode of intervention which tends to be authoritarian.

A significant finding of the study concluded that Sexton-Bowerman, while acknowledged as the singular instrument in the field, is nevertheless incomplete in terms of serving as a basis for in-depth statistical analysis of the subject. Future researchers

in conflict management may wish to investigate these findings, replicate them, and extend them into such areas as conflict situation structure and content as well as cognitive theory and application.

A general conclusion reached by the writer is that this present study should be but an initial effort in extending the knowledge of conflict management styles and concepts regarding specific levels of educational administration. As expressed in earlier chapters, an analysis of resolution theories and practices has heretofore not been undertaken on a scale as the one designed for this writing. While conclusions are possible regarding the results of the present findings, the potential for extending the knowledge in the field beyond these findings appears noteworthy.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

Conflict in school settings is an everyday occurrence, since unanimity of opinion seldom exists among teachers, administrators, parents, and students. There is a potential for conflict in virtually every decision which confronts the school administrator, and coping efficiently and effectively with potential and actual conflicts is perhaps one of the most important aspects of the administrator's position. (Nebgen, 1978).

Until fairly recently, conflict had been viewed solely as a destructive force; the hidden assets and value of conflict as a positive influence in improving performance and helping to overcome staleness and inertia in organizations has only been recognized in the past decade. Conflict persists, however, in having its destructive side and can result in feelings of antagonisms which will negatively affect performance goals.

Conflict continues to this day to be a way of life in American schools, just as it is in the American political system. Indeed, it would appear that schools often absorb the wrath of community hostility and tension.

Spillane (1972) states that one reason why the schools are the targets of this frustration is because they are the institutions "most directly concerned with the shaping of the future." He points out that "many of the forces upon which parents have traditionally looked to for support in the task of raising their children...have lost virtually all of their ancient force." (p. 12) Only the school remains (at least externally) as a visible entity for which to view frustration--and not a little hope.

Background

Reasons why the school becomes the focal point of conflict are sketchy at best. The literature has little to say on this subject, although it would seem essential for school administrators to know just why they are so often at the center of community controversy (Schofield, 1975).

Since conflict is as unavoidable for the school administrator as it is for society in general, it becomes important that he or she be prepared to cope with conflict, the administrator needs to know how to channel this reality towards constructive ends. Knowledge of this concept is not easily mastered, or even gleaned. It results from differing experiences--some studied and analyzed through theory and formalized constructs, and others acquired through encounters

with individuals and incidents in conflict settings. Knowledge of conflict principles also results from the ability to analyze singular and group controversies in terms of a larger context and to comprehend roots and causes of human behavior in conflict situations.

Because of these and other reasons, the theory of conflict is of significant importance to the practicing administrator. The large repository of theory which currently exists, however, emanates from fields such as political science, business management, sociology, psychology, and philosophy, and not from education.

Yet theory is important to school administrators who daily are involved in conflict-laden situations and who require conceptual frameworks within which to analyze divisive happenings. Conflict is an illusive phenomenon to define (Corwin, 1969) but generalizations are possible across a theoretical continuum. Valid principles are underlying most approaches to conflict investigation and resolution. It is often possible to isolate such principles for the purpose of study, synthesis, and predictability.

Besides studying conflict in an abstract sense, there are some practical approaches which school administrators can adopt and which have been demonstrated by researchers in allied fields.

These findings will be explored in this study and the writer will attempt to present from these background sources significant guidelines and derivative information which may be useful to the educational administrator.

An inquiry into background investigation reveals studies which outline the development of conflict resolution theory from larger and more extensive constructs of role theory and role conflict theory. The major studies dealing with conflict theory were attributed to Merton (1957), Getzels and Guba (1955), Kahn (1964), and Katz (1966).

Landmark studies concerned with conflict resolution behavior were Parsons and Shils (1951), Stouffer (1962), Gross (1958), and Edelman (1964).

Blake and Mouton (1961) in their study of management strategies concluded that the following activities constituted conflict management:

(1) definition of the problem;
(2) review of the problem;
(3) development of a range of alternatives;
(4) debate of alternatives;
(5) reaching of solutions;
(6) explanation and evaluation of solutions;
(7) weighing alternate solutions;
(8) selection of the appropriate solutions.

Additionally, Bailey (1971), provides a turning point in the literature of conflict management by his identification of three basic types of conflict situations:

(1) subordinate conflict (between the administrator and a person or group over which he/she has authority or responsibility);

(2) superordinate conflict (between the administrator and a person or group which has authority over him/her);

(3) lateral conflict (between the administrator and a person or group with which he/she has equal authority).

Much of the research in conflict management from this point in time to the present has utilized Bailey's typology. The present study will, in large measure, be limited to Bailey's "subordinate conflict" designation, and that limitation is hereby so stated.

Zeigler (1980) cautions that unresolved subordinate disputes may result in a broadening of conflict to either superordinate or lateral, and, as such, attention is called to the importance of the understanding of the designations.

Misunderstanding may readily prosper as it does in Mintzberg (1973) where his description of the "disturbance handler" role is representative of the management

literature not only in its disfunctional characterization ("disturbance occurs, a correction is necessary"), but also in that it does not address the possibility that the disturbance may expand even though it is apparent that the probability exists. Added to the findings of Blake and Mouton, and Bailey, is the work produced by Richard Schmuck (1972), wherein he analyzes conflict resolution methodology as seen from the viewpoint of the group facilitator.

Runkel (1979), in addition to providing a theoretical backdrop for those individuals in leadership roles, produced a study which attempts to bring about an understanding of the characteristics of humans and their organizations; this study is most beneficial to school administrators involved in conflict settings. His analysis of the school's capabilities for problem solving is especially well presented. Runkel's limitations (and this may also be said of other researchers of this era) resulted from an almost exclusively philosophical treatment of the overall subject. He, as others, did not extensively develop the processes required for present or immediate remediation.

On the other hand, Derr (1975) pursued efforts which tended to be weighted heavily in clinician's methodology with scant emphasis on human development.

But his perspectives, drawn from the military viewpoint (he was a leading consultant in management operations at the United States Naval Postgraduate School in Monterrey, California), did provide an objective balance to the more theoretical investigators in the field. The same can be said for Ellison (1976), in his study commissioned by the ERIC Clearinghouse for Educational Administration. Ellison utilized many of Derr's concepts in adapting the latter's model to conflicts encountered in American public schools.

DeCecco's (1974) study was also designed for the schools, but he restricted his investigation to secondary institutions in general, and urban, ghettoized high schools in particular. While this may be considered a drawback to his overall contribution to the field, his research nevertheless provided new dimensions in points of view regarding conflict differences and similarities. DeCecco's work was commissioned by the National Institute of Education in an effort to address conflict problems which were occurring in schools located in and around core urban centers. While much of the study was limited to analyses of black and minority constraints and societal difficulties attendant to school environments, there are several chapters in the text which lend helpful information to the investigation of the administrator's role in conflict management and resolution.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to report and analyze the ways in which secondary school assistant principals say they resolve conflicts based upon their background, preparation, attitudes, and perceptions of conflict managing principles. The basic objective of the research is to establish relationships about specific school administrators' behavior patterns in conflict management as it relates to various characteristics, including (but not limited to) professional preparation and training. This objective also includes drawing some implications about the relationships that are established concerning the behavior of these individuals. The objective is refined further to generate some specific findings involving desirable conflict management practices in educational administrators.

A corollary objective is to add to the existing research and literature pertaining to conflict situations in education. This is intended to be accomplished, at least in part, by the writer's attempt, based upon the information gathered in this research, to compile a follow-up manual of conflict management principles and examples applicable to circumstances encountered by educational administrators.

The Problem

Conflict serves an important role in educational organizations (Trusty, 1976). It helps identify structural weaknesses, personal inadequacies, the need for problem policy development, procedural regulation, and the lack of responsiveness to students, teachers, parents, and others involved in the learning process. It also serves to release tension which may threaten organizational stability. The problem is not one of eliminating conflict, but of employing it constructively in furthering educational goals and objectives. Administrators who view conflict from a negative perspective or who ignore the functional role of conflict may unwittingly serve to inhibit the development of more effective strategies for managing educational crises. Emphasis upon democratic leadership and humanistic-oriented administrative proposals such as Likert's participative management, MacGregor's Theory Y, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, Halpin's organizational climate, and Argyris' organizational behavior, has increased the potential for open and overt human conflict. Interaction among school personnel increases the generation of conflicting beliefs and creates the probability of alternative solutions which then must be contemplated.

Further, while managing educational conflict may be viewed by many administrators as a high priority, the providing of administrators with the skills to manage these conflicts has not been a high priority in many institutions which train and prepare such administrators. Educational research and observation indicates that educational administrators in general have been ineffective in managing conflict situations. A portion of this ineffectiveness points to their training and behavior which indicates that they have been unable to link or apply theories, procedures, and skills for successful conflict resolution to actual operations.

Empirical surveys have demonstrated that administrators who have been called upon to manage conflict in school settings generally do so as third party intervenors who are ill-trained as negotiators, mediators, or arbitrators, and who approach the task with little more than a facility or "knack" that has been acquired through actual experience. Such "on the job" gathered skills have not necessarily provided the optimum of satisfactory results.

For relatively newer administrators, or upwardly mobile middle-line administrators, the thought of entering a ring of conflict replete with controverting issues and individuals may be a forbidding prospect.

It is to this segment of middle-line administrators--more specifically, secondary school assistant principals--that the writer will address the thrust of this present study.

Statement of the Problem Hypotheses

Empirically, the study was concerned with the prime objective of conducting, by means of assessment instruments, a two-part survey of all assistant principals in Massachusetts listed by the Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Administrators for the following purposes:

(a) to assess the background, training, and opinions of these administrators regarding conflict concepts, procedures, and preparedness;

(b) to determine, by means of the Sexton-Bowerman rating scale, the intervention style of the respondents to a series of case conflict analogies.

In order to develop research hypotheses to test the above objective the following terms were used;

Conflict Management - A dynamic, ongoing approach where a conflict manager recognizes problems and acts to use the energy they generate to improve the organization. (Derr, 1975)

Independent Variables - experience, education, age, preparedness, conflict perceptions (selected)

Dependent Variables - A two-part Likert-type scale: (a) willingness to intervene;

1 to 5 (avoidance to take action)
(B) actual intervention; 1 to 5
(authoritarian to egalatarian)

Hypotheses

H1 The variables of age and experience are significantly correlated to methods of intervention style.

H1.1 The greater the age and experience, the greater the correlation with the authoritarian style of intervention.

H1.2 The lower the age and experience, the greater the correlation with the egalitarian style of intervention.

H2 There is a direct relationship between responses regarding willingness to intervene with responses regarding style of intervention.

H3 There is a direct relationship between the confidence level (as expressed by respondent opinions regarding adequate training in conflict management) and the egalitarian style of intervention.

H4 There is a direct relationship between the confidence level (as expressed by respondent opinions regarding inadequate training in conflict management) and the authoritarian style of intervention.

## The Design of the Study

Because conflict in education pertains to a variety of individuals and situations, it was necessary to:

(1) select a framework which specified certain types of conflict to be considered;
(2) determine common characteristics of conflict;
(3) delimit the scope of sampling to a manageable segment of educational administrator;
(4) briefly relate educational conflict to that found in other fields;
(5) consider the implications of the findings gathered within the scope of the study conducted and relate these implications to other settings;
(6) consider the concept of predictability in drawing conclusions relative to findings revealed in the survey.

Basically, the study responded to three questions:

(A) what is the professional background of secondary school assistant principals in relation to their formalized training and preparation for conflict situations in which they are involved on a regular basis;
(B) how do secondary school assistant principals react to determined categories of conflict;
(C) would additional training in graduate levels of instruction affect significantly the manner or degree of response of secondary school assistant principals in conflict situations.

The first two questions provided the working scope of the research; the third will most likely serve as a continuing topic for future investigation.

The first question was responded to by analyzing the results of the pilot tested questionnaire (Appendix A) which was administered to public school assistant principals at the secondary level.

The Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Administrators (MASSA) listed under active membership (1980-81) some 171 assistant principals; this group served as the population of the study and all were surveyed. This questionnaire was initially developed by the writer at a conference in Detroit, Michigan, in August of 1980. Several meetings were conducted over a period of ten days which involved the active participation of over one hundred teachers and administrators. Item questions were suggested, debated, revised, and accepted based upon information producing proclivities in the area of conflict management and resolution.

Further refinement of the instrument was accomplished in the setting of graduate seminars in educational administration held at Salem State College during the 1980-81 academic year. It was during these sessions that the suggestion of limiting the study to secondary school principals was adopted. Part of the rationale for accepting this concept was due to the fact that the author was most familiar with the concerns and constraints of this group; also, the likelihood of a more favorable

response pattern on the part of assistant principals to a survey of this nature was preferred to exist. While opinion and conjecture played a role in arriving at this last suggestion, the effort at least served to reduce the range of sampling to a controllable entity.

In the employment of the questionnaire, the writer attempted to analyze three dimensions of professional status: (1) education (or lack of it); (2) preparation and (3) experience. These variables also included standard demographic dimensions in order to help describe the nature of the sample.

Responding to the second question, which involves reactions of the subjects to determined categories of conflict situations, the writer utilized the scale devised by Sexton-Bowerman in 1977-78 (Appendix B). The intent of this instrument is to allow a self-assessment of secondary school administrators across four categories of conflict:

(1) <u>role conflict,</u> which is sociological in nature and allows the respondent to negotiate within situational parameters;

(2) <u>power conflict,</u> which may involve a psychological dealing in personalities with either overt or subtle resolution;

(3) <u>crisis conflict,</u> which is characterized by the immediacy of the problem situation and which demands an accelerated response in order to reach a solution;

(4) maintenance conflict, which typifies internal, routine matters, and which often can multiply, gather force, and orbit into crisis predicaments.

The self-test and grid were developed by the authors to help administrators identify both their willingness to intervene and their style of intervention in conflict situations with students, parents, and colleagues. Tentative assessments endeavor to define one's placement on a grid scale from "success-seeker" to "failure-avoider," and a style of intervention from authoritarian to egalatarian.

An investigative analysis approach to questions (A) and (B) enabled the writer to draw comparisons and conclusions from several possible paired responses involving the two instruments.

As an example: will respondents who consider their positions to be permanent (questionnaire, #4) react significantly different from transitory respondees in role conflict situations (part 1, role conflict category, Sexton-Bowerman)? Similarly, to what extent will educational preparation (or lack of it) affect responses in the four conflict categories? Obviously, limitations of time and resources, as well as scientific procedures, will obviate the necessity of reducing the scope of possible cross-analysis and synthesis. The concept of predictability will be treated in the same procedural manner.

Finally, responding to question (C) will allow the reader as well as the writer to develop additional hypotheses generated from the data accumulated to that point. This is considered to be a legitimate research technique (Kerlinger, 1973) and could serve as a basis for further study. As far as the writer is concerned, the methodology for responding to question (C) will be the future development of a model to be presented in a "manual" or "primer" outline. Herein, the author will attempt to cultivate (utilizing theoretical-constructual systems of demonstration) a prototype which will enable the administrator to learn what "kinds of things" work in conflict resolution. A standing assumption will exist, however, that specific steps cannot be applied to every conflict situation.

The statistical procedure of frequency analysis will be used in examining the data furnished by the questionnaire. Additional SPSS procedures involving ANOVA, cross-tabulations, Chi Square, and Pearson's correlations will provide for comparisons between the questionnaire and the Sexton-Bowerman scales.

Limitations of the Study

Because conflict in education pertains to a variety of situations and individuals, it was necessary to select a framework within which to conduct meaningful and workable research.

The aforementioned Detroit conference and the subsequent educational administration seminars at Salem State College led to the proposal of an investigative analysis into conflict management theory and practice as examined from the operative position of the secondary school assistant principalship.

It was assumed that, while the study is limited to a particular segment of educational administration, the generalizations realized may extend to other classifications of administrators. Particularly might this be so in regard to item questions involving professional preparation and adequacy of training in connection with conflict management principles. The employment of the Sexton-Bowerman scale, however, may be more suspect when higher levels of line administrators are contemplated for comparison. Also considered to be a limiting factor in this research is the perspective of Bailey's subordinate conflict role, as distinguished from superordinate and lateral hierarchies. Finally, because the researcher considered that additional parameters might be introduced into the study, no private or parochial schools were surveyed.

Significance of the Study

Conflict management has been defined to be an important priority of many school administrators. Conflict among students, teachers, administrators, parents, and other citizens is pervasive. Its presence is reflected in a

multiplicity of circumstances which take place daily within the educational environs. It is questionable, however, and an objective of this study, as to whether the educational administrator in general (and, for the purposes of this study, secondary school assistant principals in particular) are effective in managing conflict situations. This may, in part, be due to a lack of professional preparation which may hamper the behavior of the practitioners in applying theory and procedure to specific circumstances. In addition, a search of the literature indicates that few, if any, studies have been undertaken which attempt to examine the socio-functional perspectives of educational conflict. Further, there is little evidence that much has been done to link the theoretical base of conflict resolving principles to actual case structure with the objective of producing usable strategies. In this study, the writer endeavors to do this.

As the work continues, Chapter Two will investigate the literature in the field, while Chapter Three will present a design procedure. Chapter Four will statistically analyze the data, and Chapter Five will propose a summary and conclusions.

# CHAPTER TWO

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

A review of the literature of conflict management theory and practice was commissioned. From an ERIC computer search, which initially listed some 10,158 references, the number having a relation to secondary school administrators was reduced to a scant few. Additional sources were located in industrial settings and were included in order to present a background of the topic as seen from an organizational development outlook. A DATRIX study found that no pertinent dissertations had been undertaken which considered the unique perspective of the secondary school assistant principal.

Characteristics of conflict, conflict management, and resolution practices that contribute to the viewpoint of establishing a rapport with the theoretical bases of decision-making principles were also included. The administrator is thus presented with this amalgam of literature with the intent of demonstrating not only the wealth of general subject matter in the broad field, but also in the hope that the research can provide a framework within which operational components of conflict management can be better understood.

Conflict has been a source of conceptual confusion for decades (Fink, 1968). It is a frequently used and oft abused concept in the social sciences. This abuse stems, in part, from equating it with such terms as disagreement, hostility, competition, cooperation, controversy, tension, stress, and incompatability. In particular, Fink's review of the conflict literature illustrates the lack of consensus among researchers regarding the distinction between conflicts and related concepts. While scholars recognize the futility of selecting from the mosaic a single definition of conflict, many of them acknowledge that the use of conflict in a generic sense to incorporate goals, emotions, perceptions, behaviors, strategies, and outcomes contribute to the theoretical muddle which characterizes the state of the art in the conflict literature (Thomas, 1976).

In addition to conceptual confusion, discussions of conflict are plagued with a seemingly incurable malaise of emphasizing either the constructive or the destructive effects of conflict. Thus, scholars become embroiled in an indeterminate controversy on the evaluative dimensions of conflict (Putnam, 1979). Such practices, in turn, overlook the normalcy of conflict and underscore outcomes as the salient criteria for determining the effectiveness of conflict. For example, research on "win-win" versus "win-lose" or "fixed sum" versus "variable

sum' approaches to conflict generally examines outcomes as indices of effective conflict management (Hawkes and Smith, 1973).

In contemporary times, however, some theorists have argued that conflict is not only inevitable but aids organizations in advancing inter-group cohesiveness and solidarity (Coser, 1956); in maintaining a balance of power between opposing forces (Blake and Mouton, 1964); in generating creative approaches to problem-solving (Hall, 1971); and in identifying problems which require organizational change (Litterer, 1966).

This present perspective, then, treats conflict as a condition which must be managed rather than one which should be eliminated or avoided (Deutsch, 1971). Research on conflict and conflict management has generated a massive array of theoretical and empirical literature which cuts across all disciplines in the social sciences. Although this literature provides insights for misunderstanding conflict in organizational settings, the lack of integration and systematic classification of this material often hinders transfer of knowledge and theoretical development— especially as it relates to educational administration.

Introductory texts in political science simply define conflict as "situations in which one individual wishes to follow a line of action that would make it

difficult or impossible for someone else to pursue his own desires " (Dahl, 1965, p.29). Such texts also assume the necessity, indeed the desirability, of conflict: "... conflict is not an unfortunate and temporary aberration from the norm..." (Ranney, 1966, p.7-8). More sophisticated conceptual schemes, such as proposed by Schmidt and Kochan (1972), include not only goal incompatibility but also a variety of other preconditions. That is, they agree that incompatibility of goals is a necessary but not sufficient definition of conflict.

Ziegler (1980, p.11) presents a generally acceptable definition: "Conflict is a situation in which two or more parties perceive that their goals are incompatible."

Obviously, conflict in schools or in any organization is common (Nebgen, 1978). However, perceived incompatibility of goals may not lead to behavior normally regarded as conflictual. One frame of reference—derived initially from the works of Ross (1930) and Simmel (1955)—argues that incompatible goals may lead to either conflict or competition. The analogy is between a race and a fight. In a race, one does nothing to obstruct the efforts of one's opponents; whereas in a fight, one does. The distinction is made now largely by specialists in industrial relations such as Walton and McKersie (1965),

but seems essential.

Thus, the definition may expand to include: (a) mutually perceived incompatibility goals, and (b) perceived opportunity for interference (Seiler, 1963).

The literature, in attempting to define the dimensions of conflict, follows Sorokin (1928) in his effort at identifying the nature of antagonistic unity. Dozens of schemes have evolved, each with a domain of social science attached to it. At one extreme is encountered the works like those of Chase (1951), which classifies parties of conflicts from personal to international. While such efforts are tedious, they should not be summarily dismissed as each has attracted the attention of various teams of social scientists. Therefore, personal quarrels attract the attention of small group psychologists while conflicts between nations interest students of international politics.

Clearly, several types of conflict may be eliminated which administrators may be expected to encounter. Private conflicts may not be of direct concern, but the argument exists that an administrator's private conflicts affect his/her external behavior. The difficulty of pursuing a workable set of hypotheses while struggling with this constraint is amplified in the works of Mack and Snyder (1957), Dahrendorf (1961), and Galtung (1965). Therefore, the conclusion is drawn that, for purposes of the present

study, the need for reduction and simplification is necessary.

Bailey (1971) provides a focus. He identified three types of conflict situation: subordinate (between an administrator and a person or group over which the administrator has authority or responsibility); superordinate conflict ( between the administrator and a person or groups which has authority over the administrator); and lateral conflict ( between the administrator and a person or groups which has equal authority).

The advantages of this typology of conflict situations are manifest in the ambiguities it suggests, as well as in its simplicity. For instance, conflict may arise because neither party agrees to the definition of the authority relationship. Loveridge (1971), for example, found that a fundamental conflict between councilmen and managers existed in their perceptions of the manager's role in policy-making. A similar discrepancy existed in a study by Gross, Mason, and McEachern (1972), in which a school board/superintendent conflict arose concerning responsibility to respective constituencies. The analysis in this case revealed that the dispute was indeed as much over appropriate roles as over substantial issues. The same approach analysis has been used in developing conclusions relative to roles and substantial

issues encountered by assistant principals involved in the present study.

Bailey's typology, in addition to stimulating ideas and notions pertaining to roles and issues, offers the additional advantage of clarification of research domains.

Subordinate conflict – that involving an administrator and those over whom responsibility is exercised – is normally the domain of school administrators, industrial relations managers, and related practitioners. Most literature in management is concerned with managing conflict within the organization, where a hierarchy of authority is normally established (Ziegler, 1977).

This work will, in large measure, be limited to Bailey's "subordinate conflict" designation. However, some mention must be given to possible instances where increased subordinate disputes may result in a broadening of conflict to either superordinate or lateral levels. Mintzberg (1973) describes the "disturbance Handler" role in presenting an example of school principals who, feeling that they have been improperly managed, may seek to gain legal redress by imposing authority upon the superintendent from a superordinate source (courts); teachers who cannot resolve a dispute may withhold their services, involving the support or opposition of com-

munity organizations, which have lateral authority relations with school managers. Within the subordinate conflict concept is also the potential for particular types of crises to shift emphasis and cross over or accelerate into other domains. For example, Sexton (1979) cautions the school administrator not to allow role conflict to change into power conflict, and maintenance problems to change into crisis problems.

In the absence of institutionalized and legitimate conflict articulation, management becomes more complex. Indeed, some writers, such as Barnard (1958), believe that the natural, almost instinctive response is not to regulate, but to avoid conflict: to reduce contact between conflicting parties (Nebgen, 1978); to prevent potential controversies from achieving formal agenda status (Cobb and Elder, 1972). Intra-organizational conflict is occasionally resolved in this manner, especially when such conflicts are a consequence of the misperception of conflicting individual goals (Burke, 1972). Conflicts which esculate because of avoidance, or procedural insensitivity, are clearly amenable to various tracing strategies such as organizational development, as Golembiewski (1977) has argued.

Blake and Mouton (1964), in their "Conflict Grid" in Figure 1, attempted to present a conceptual basis

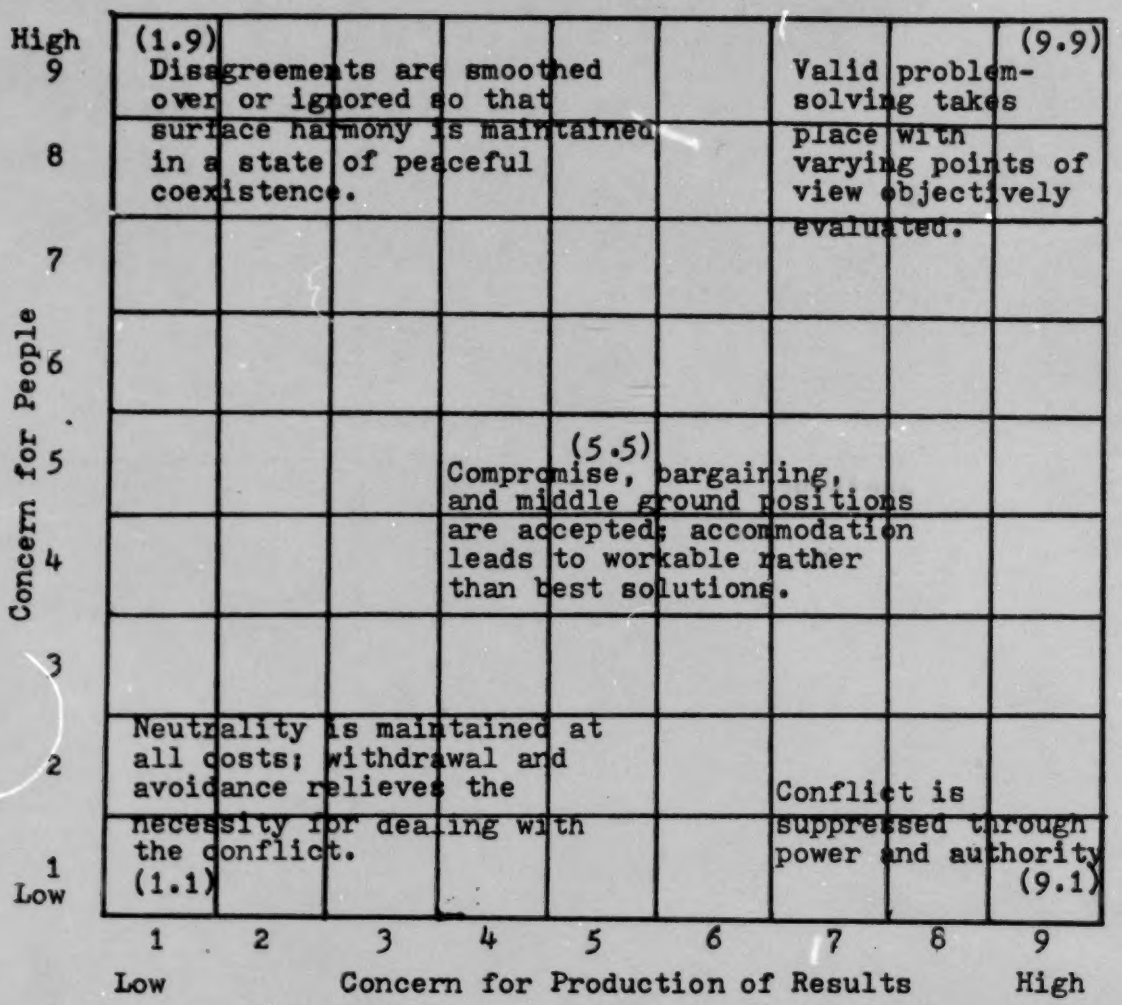

High
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
Low
Concern for People
(1.9)
Disagreements are smoothed over or ignored so that surface harmony is maintained in a state of peaceful coexistence.
(9.9)
Valid problem-solving takes place with varying points of view objectively evaluated.
(5.5)
Compromise, bargaining, and middle ground positions are accepted; accommodation leads to workable rather than best solutions.
Neutrality is maintained at all costs; withdrawal and avoidance relieves the necessity for dealing with the conflict.
(1.1)
Conflict is suppressed through power and authority
(9.1)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Low
Concern for Production of Results
High

Figure 1, Blake and Mouton "Conflict Grid"

for analyzing situations of conflict. The "grid" is a way of identifying basic assumptions in situations where differences are present and where considerations of the axes portray the uses of strategy which show a polarity of resolution styles in the application of conflict management theory. The literature relating to organizational development illustrates several models which deal with this general subject.

Schein (1969) adapted Tannenbaum's model in presenting (Figure 2) an individualistic conceptualization of leadership behavior in conflict management situations.


Boss-centered leadership
Subordinate-centered leadership
Use of authority by the manager
Area of freedom for subordinates
Manager makes decision and announces it.
Manager "sells" decision
Manager presents ideas and invites questions
Manager presents tentative decision subject to change
Manager presents problem and gets suggestions, makes decision
Manager defines limits
Manager asks group to make decision
Manager permits subordinates to function

Figure 2. Tannenbaum's Continuum of Leadership Behavior

(as modified and adapted by Schein)

In applying the theory of the continuum, Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) suggested that three sets of forces should be considered:

1. forces in the leader;
2. forces in the subordinates; and
3. forces in the situation. (p.65)

Schein, in commenting on Tannenbaum's continuum and Blake and Mouton's conflict grid, summarized the concepts by emphasizing the importance of becoming aware of one's own assumptions relative to identification, causation, and resolution in both leadership patterns and conflict management strategies. He concluded that the leader has a number of choices of how tightly to centralize control and how flexible to be from one decision to the next. By diagnosing forces in himself, in subordinates, and in the situation, the leader can increase flexibility and thereby effectiveness.

Broadly speaking, the literature defines six major sources of conflict (Derr, 1975): (1) interpersonal disagreements that arise when a person experiences individual stress; (2) the problems resulting from role conflict, a condition that occurs when there is a clash over one's role in the organization; (3) the power struggle that pit persons and groups against one another to achieve their own objectives; (4) the misunderstand-

ings and disagreements from differentiation, i.e., the clashes that arise because people approach common problems from very different orientations; (5) the interdependence requirements for collaboration, which, if not balanced between the parties, can cause communication and interaction breakdowns and thus lead to more intensive conflicts; and (6) the external pressures from forces outside the enterprise that breed internal pressures.

Katz and Kahn (1966) extend Derr's causation concepts in their elaboration of conflicts traced to individual stress and role pressures. In the latter, the emphasis is placed on understanding the disputes that occur when there is interaction between the person and his "role set," i.e., with others with whom he closely associates. In the former concept, there is an effort to try to determine what happened within the person that led to an experienced conflict which resulted in an action upon the role set. Role conflict is interpersonal and intragroup in nature; individual stress is intrapersonal but eventually leads to the interpersonal level of analysis (Runkel, 1979).

The literature portrays the educational administrator as a target for stress, and, at the same time, requires of the individual the task of controlling such stress. Gore (1964) suggests that before administrators seek to address areas of conflict that are interpersonal

or intergroup, they should evaluate their own perception of stress as it pertains to self, to others, and to organizational goals.

Gore draws the following conclusions about stress:

> (1) It is a potent force within the organization.
>
> (2) Stress is an overtone of almost all human existence, yet it is determinative and controlling within the emotional world that people construct for themselves and within their attempts to deal with their never completely socialized motives.
>
> (3) Tensions function as a medium of exchange and make possible the comparison of otherwise unrelated pressures, goals, demands, attitudes, hopes, values, and expectations. Since many tensions are unarticulated, it is impossible either to account for preferences that are formed or to explain the process.
>
> (4) The tension or stress network is seen as a response mechanism paralleling and combining at some points with the decision-making process when the objects of activity cannot be identified but some common response is necessary; it is an extension of the decision-making process when reasoned comparison is impossible, yet a choice must be made. (Gore, p. 47)

There is experimental evidence to support the theory of Schroder, Driver, and Streufert (1966) which postulates that an individual's capacity for complex management is altered in a curvilinear fashion as stress increases; and that therefore, the individual's maximum ability to integrate and to utilize information occur at some moderate stress level (Figure 3). The more specific effects of very

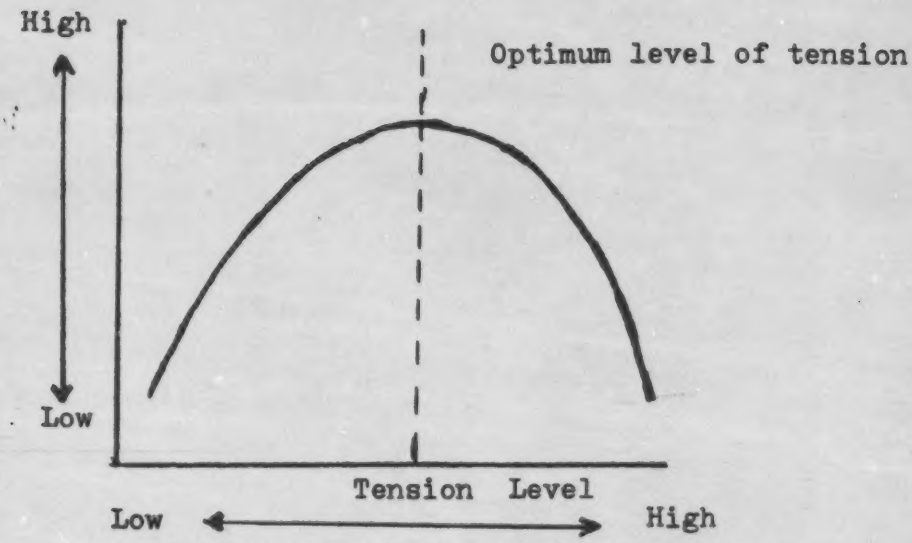



Figure 3. Relationship of Tension to Productivity in an Interpersonal Confrontation

(Individual's Capacities to Accurately Send and Receive and to Integrate Information Relevant to Conflict Management.)

high stress include consideration of fewer alternatives, rigidity, and repetition; reduction in the dimensionality of thinking (i.e., resulting in simpler perceptual systems), and reduction in the number of goals salient for the individual. High stress also increases tendencies to perceive threat and use power.

The inability to function under stress often propels the administrator into one crisis after another (Ewing, 1964). Crisis demands a decision since it involves a threat to high priority values of the organization (Bridges, 1969).

Horst (1973) points out that the "influence of

school administrators upon the educational climate can be attributed in part to their decisions (or lack of), and probably more directly by their methods of decision-making " (p.169). He goes further to suggest that styles of decision-making can be plotted along a continuum (similar to Tennenbaum's) with an extreme being represented by "snap" decisions based upon feelings or archaic information, while the other extreme is represented by the act of making a slightly delayed decision only after critically and objectively considering the reality of the crisis. Holst suggests that where an administrator falls on the continuum will determine his style of leadership in conflict management and suggests, further, that "snap" decisions are made by the more authoritarian type of administrator.

The literature shows evidence that decision-making reflects the inner beliefs and attitudes of the decision-maker. For example, Alport (1973, p.168) noted: "If the administrator is clear in his mind concerning value orientation, and the issues are known, decisions on specific situations automatically follow." Combining this with what was described by Holst, the researcher can see a difference in opinion in the literature about the process of decision-making and the attributes which affect the process.

Lippitt and Schmidt (1967) analyse the process of

risk involved in making decisions relative to managing conflict. They stated that: "Management must decide how much risk to take in the light of two criteria: (1) the goals by which achievement is measured, and (2) the odds against success in reaching them " (p.104).

Research further suggests that the individual administrator, besides functioning in a world of personal and interpersonal conflicts and crises, must never lose sight of the organization, the group, or the goals of each, if such an individual is to meet with even a modicum of success in managing conflicts (Bennis, 1969).

Halpin (1973) defines the organization as a special kind of social group whose members have varying responsibilities to reach a common task of the group. He notes that informal organizations exist within the formal organization. This has some importance to the present study of managing conflict in education. Also, Halpin makes reference to two fundamental sets of variables which define the operations of an organized group (such as a high school):

(1) Variables which define formal organization:
    (a) responsibility variables (the work one is expected to do;
    (b) formal interaction variables (the persons with whom one is expected to work).

(2) Variables which define informal organ-

izations:

(a) work performances variables (the tasks one actually performs);

(b) informal interaction variables (the people with whom one actually works) (p.155).

In a school setting (which may be considered as the organizational model of this study, inclusive of sub-set variables), the administrator, in managing conflicts, is called upon to measure the goals of his organization which are often in conflict with the personalities and personal relationships within the school. Schein (1969) recommended that the administrator consider a process of problem formation which may serve to alleviate stress while, at the same time, allowing for tensions to subside— at least to the degree of focusing on issues and not on emotions (Figure 4).

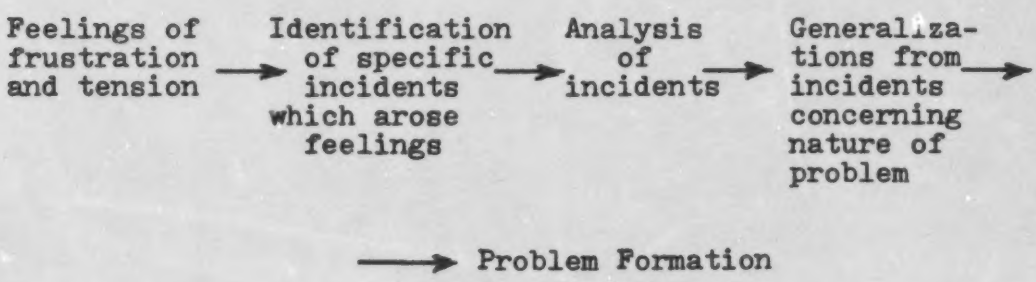

Feelings of frustration and tension
Identification of specific incidents which arose feelings
Analysis of incidents
Generalizations from incidents concerning nature of problem
Problem Formation

Figure 4, (Schein, p.49)

Schein concluded that when a problem has been adequately formulated the conflict participants can move to-

wards producing ideas or courses of action which might resolve the problem. At this stage the most likely pitfall is that proposals are evaluated one at a time. If the management of the conflict is not constrained by the crisis nature or a required immediacy of the solution, then the flow towards solution or remediation is relatively unfettered.

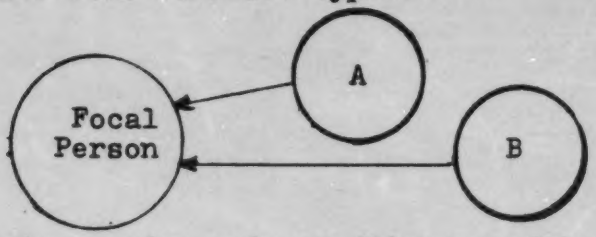
Researchers who concentrate on perceptions of messages emphasize the values, attributes, and experiences of participants and the process of interpreting communication stimuli. A key assumption seems to be that attitudes and perceptions influence behavior (Putnam, 1979). Others in this area define conflict both objectively, as incompatible activities, and subjectively, as the perceptions of these activities. Studies which fall into these categories do not consistently adhere to one or two theoretical models. However, an emphasis on perceiving and interpreting messages is one aspect of the broad range of information processing.

The role of perception in conflict management serves three distinct functions in the organizational literature: (1) perceptions serve to define the conflict situation and are equally as important as reality (Deutsch, 1969); also giving testimony to this thought was Rosenburg and Stern (1970). In effect, the definition of a

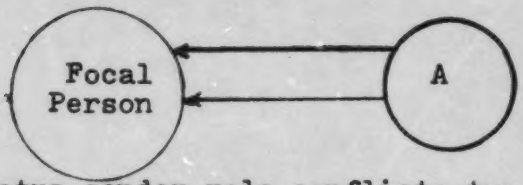
conflict situation hinges upon participants' perceptions of it (the "differentiation" as was previously cited by Derr) in addition to conflict patterns within the organizational environment. (2) Perceptions are a source of conflict. According to Longini (1971), an individual's perceptions of the information environment (Derr's "external pressures"), along with values, determines his behavior choices. (3) Perceptions are a potential resource for effective conflict management (Stagner, 1965). Since perceptions are one of the alterable components of conflict, resolutions can occur by exposing and reducing misperceptions (Burton, 1968; Stagner, 1965; Deutsch, 1969). Thus, perceptions of the information environment serve as definitions of conflict situations, as potential sources of conflict, and as resources for managing conflicts.

The literature approaches resolution behavior of people in roles from several viewpoints. Generally, role conflict studies have examined ways in which disputes may be arranged or codified in situations which allow for internal as well as external analysis. Role conflict has been classified in terms of relationships between the role actor (in this study, the secondary administrator) and expectations or requirements for the role performance of others. In their book, Organizational Stress: Studies in Role Conflict and Ambiguity, Kahn, et.al.,

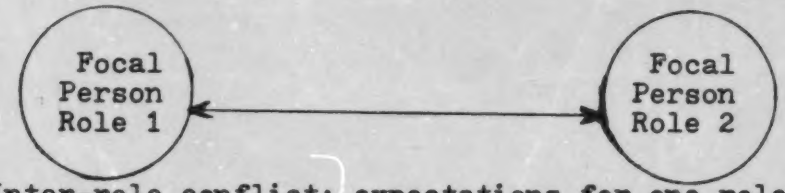
(1964), and later Katz and Kahn (1966) the authors elaborated five types of role conflict with respect to senders and receivers. Figure 5 illustrates these five role conflict types:




Inter-sender role conflict: conflicting expectations from two or more others.

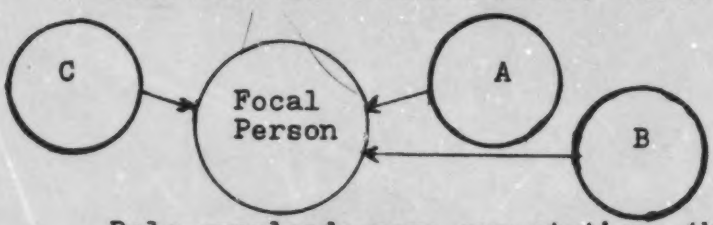



Intra-sender role conflict: two or more conflicting expectations from one significant other.




Inter-role conflict: expectations for one role are in conflict with those for another role played by the same individual.

Person-role conflict: requirements (expectations) for role behavior violate needs, values of the focal person.




Role overload: more expectations than role can handle.

Figure 5. Five types of Role Conflict

For the most part, the figure classifies conflict relationships without designating any provisions for action or alternatives to resolving or managing the conflict. Each paradigm, however, could be considered as an indicator of dynamic relationships. Focal persons tend to react in some particular way based on their own reasons as determined by basic personality factors such as needs, values, and attitudes.

In general, any of the five modes of resolution could be applied by an administrator in responding to a set of conflict issues similar to those devised by Sexton-Bowerman (1978), Appendix A. In addition, each of the types of role conflict are special cases of the general role episode model (Katz and Kahn, 1966), and the five modes of role conflict resolution are specific behavioral reactions applicable to a variety of role conflicts across more numerous conflict issues. The detail needed to depict an accurate behavioral design is emphasized by Pugh (1966). He reported: ".. an individual's role conception and role performance is a function not only of the role expectation but of the individual's personality, abilities, and attitudes " (p.36). Janis (1959) also indicates that the role behavior process is begun when the individual defines the role conflict associated with performance and foresees

decision engagement.

Initial attempts to assess and predict role conflict management behavior were based on role actors' decisions involving pattern variables developed by Parsons and Shils (1951). Vine (1969, p.327) refers to the pattern variables in Parsons' terms: "Parsons thinks that dilemmas of orientation must be resolved before any action can take place." Because the pattern variables describe essentially the predisposition of the actor and are components of his value orientation, they have been operationalized into behavior modes. Parsons' pattern variables (adapted from Getzels, et.al., 1968) are: affectivity versus affective neutrality (immediate gratification or self-restraint per long-term goals), self versus collective orientation (self-interest or interest in groups), universalism versus particularism (general norms or particular relationships), ascription versus achievement (what is or what may be expected), and diffusiveness versus achievement (what is or what may be expected regarding a specific selection of conflict issues).

Several studies in conflict management behavior have attempted to use the pattern variables as predictors. Scarr's (1964) work involving the particular-universalistic orientation of the role actor is representative of these studies.

In an effort to analyze other modes of behavior in role conflict situations some studies provide descriptive accounts of resolution behavior without using behavioral models or predictor variables. The general descriptions are usually not the result of rigorous research design and are mainly descriptive and classificatory in nature (Pennington, 1973). Examples would include the works of Gerhardt (1971), Nix and Bates (1962), Goode (1960), Rubington (1965), Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), and Blood (1960).

Following is a brief summary of the behaviors observed by the above authors:

Role induction: coercing, evaluating, masking, postponing, role reversal, co-opting others.

Role modification: joking, referral to a third party, exploring, compromising, consolidating, enlarging areas of autonomy.

Role taking: acting out a role, acting as a controller, confidante, crony, or convert to avoid or prevent conflict.

Reject or forget persons' opinions, devalue the importance of persons and types.

Tolerate disagreements without acting in any way, collective adaptation, safety valves, escapes.

Discussion, sharing of decision-making, full equilization of the authority domains.

Eliminate role relationships, prevent relationships from developing, separation.

Extension, delegation, or compartmentalization of actions, establish priorities.

Isolation of performance, shift decision-making responsibility.

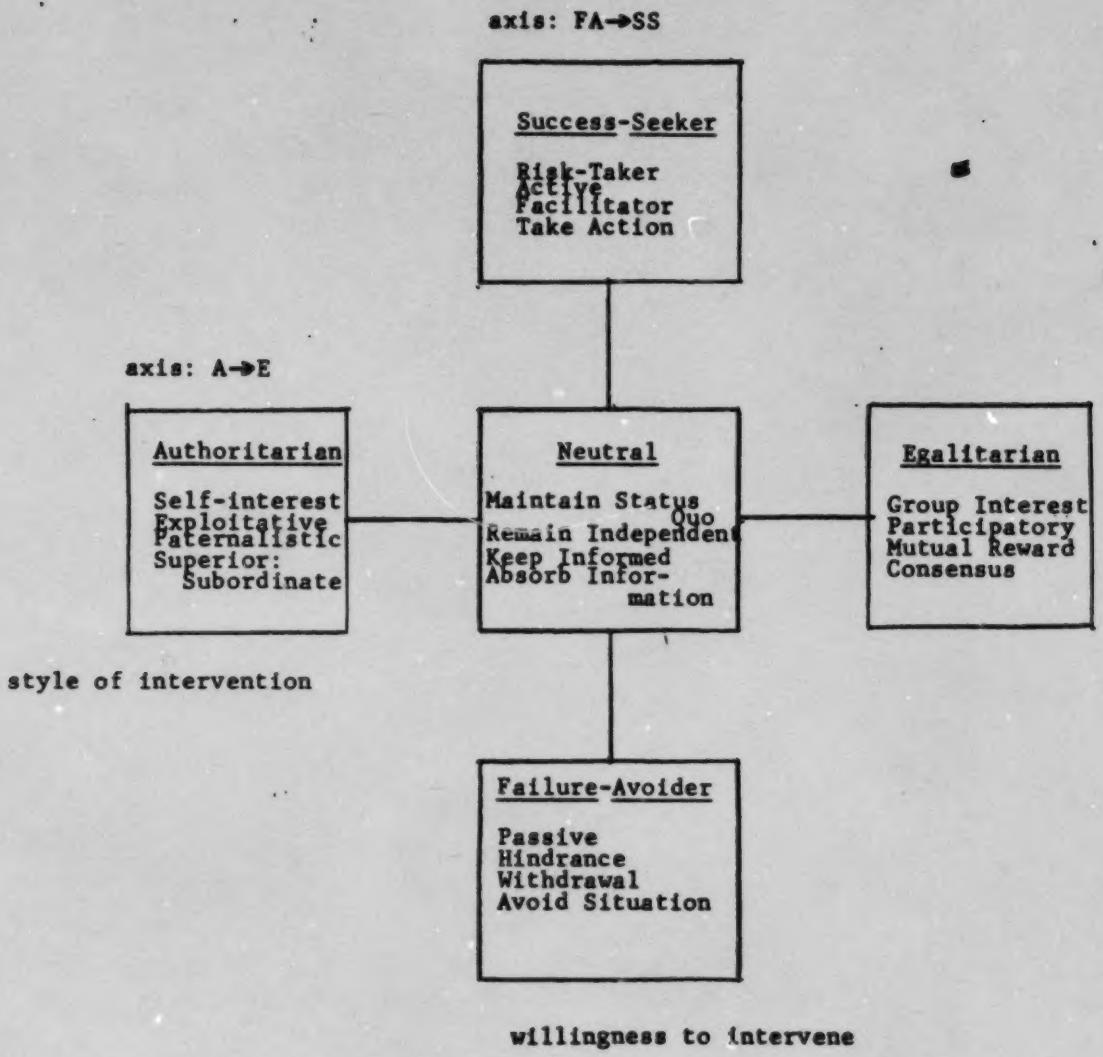
Accept decision responsibility, delay decision responsibility (suspension, stalling) reject decision responsibility.

Intervention styles, intervention models (from authoritarian to egalitarian).

Willingness to intervene (on a continuum from avoidance to facilitating and risk-taking).

Sexton-Bowerman (1977) devised a variation of Blake and Mouton's "Conflict Grid" and capsulized many of the behavior concepts and characteristics of conflict management principles when they presented their "Conflict-Handling for Educational Leaders" grid, Figure 6. The authors postulated that the proper approach to successful conflict management is to select an appropriate style and to intervene at the appropriate time. Differing case situations and differing crisis sequencing may result in altering styles based upon individual circumstances. Essentially, Sexton-Bowerman maintain that there is no categorically correct approach to any given situation, i.e., the variables of conflict situations may require disparate interventions. What <u>is</u> maintained by the authors is the necessity for administrators to thoroughly familiarize themselves with conflict management theory and practices in order to prepare for the inevitable demands which conflict situations will thrust upon them. The model served as a basis for

## Conflict-Handling for Educational Leaders




Sexton-Bowerman 1977

Figure 6.

the empirical study of secondary assistant principals, and will be discussed in succeeding chapters.

The story-form or case study approach provided in most of the studies of conflict management have been questioned during various stages of development. Korber (1951) criticized the simplification of the specific situations in which subjects were asked to make judgments. A major concern of researchers, claimed the author, should require realistic qualities and extenuating circumstances so that judgments would be more "real-life like." Stouffer and Toby (1951) answered the criticism by emphasizing two points. First, it appeared that several variations of the same theme provided a good device for involving respondents, and, second, the authors noted that it was probably better not to introduce too much concrete and perhaps distracting detail. The latter rationale has been widely accepted.

Following the preliminary interest in role conflict resolution, studies began attempts at explaining why persons resolve conflict in ways they apparently favored. Mishler (1951, 1953) considered authoritarian personality variables in a study which was similar in design to that of the aforementioned Stouffer and Toby. Getzels and Guba (1954, 1955) applied existing ideas of conflict to the management of military officers. The study was seen as

an extension of Mishler's work in the sense that personality factors were studied. The authors concluded that the concepts of legitimacy of expectations and consequence of needs and expectations were factors in role conflict resolution behavior.

Gross, Mason, and McEachern (1958) developed the initial role conflict resolution theory which remains supported by the current literature with the exception of the independent action identified by Ritzer and Trice (1969) and the analysis of styles of intervention by Sexton-Bowerman (1977b). The Gross, et al. study was concerned with the school superintendent. The sample included 50% of the school superintendents in Massachusetts. Four conflict issues identified as "situations involving problems with which all superintendents must deal" were presented in a situation or story-form via an open-ended intervention method. Respondents were asked to describe how they would solve conflicts resulting from expectations placed upon them. The four situation issues were: (a) personnel hiring and promotion, (b) time allocations of after-office hours, (c) teacher salary recommendations, and (d) budget recommendations.

Analysis and summary of the study tested the significance of each mode of resolution compared to chance selection. The authors determined percentages of agree-

ment from questionnaire responses indicating what would be done in reaction to various conflict situations presented. At the .01 level, 91% of the actual behavior indicated by respondents was correctly predicted.

Several reviewers and researchers (Dawe, 1968; Gordon, 1972; Pennington, 1973) have realized the importance of the development and applicability of both the Gross study and other studies which support basic concepts focusing upon similar perspectives of role conflict resolution. Additional studies have tested the theory and modified it slightly. Few attempts to discount it completely have been made. The major results of these studies have shown, in general, less significance in predicting responses (i.e., how the individual would manage or resolve the conflict) — the "willingness to intervene" concept of Sexton-Bowerman — versus observed responses (how the individual actually did resolve the conflict) —the "style of intervention" concept of Sexton-Bowerman.

Subsequent studies have not discounted the theory in all its parts; neither has an attempt been made to replace the theory nor any of its component parts. The major objection raised in the literature regarding the Gross study was that the variable determinants and choice selections offered by the authors were so universal as

to bring into question the high correlation and predictability factors which were reported.

Workers in the industrial setting (along with their managers) have provided another cluster of conflict management studies (Miller and Form, 1964; Simons, 1964, 1978). Gullahorn (1956, 1963) found that labor leaders exhibited three kinds of resolution behavior. The generalizability of Gullahorn's analysis is questionable, however, since a very small sample of individuals was used in the study. Six officers of one local union were asked to respond to one conflict situation involving only one issue. Miller and Shull (1972) gained some precision in measurement by developing a negative sanction scale composed of five items, whereas previous studies used dichotomous "yes-no" responses.

Sayan (1968) and Sayan and Charters (1970) tested Gross's theory of conflict management by collecting measures on the variables in advance of the time at which actors encountered and resolved conflict. Two samples of elementary school principals were analyzed with a five month interval between measurement of authority and personal orientation and the measurement of modes of resolution.

Conclusions reached by the authors indicated the proportion of correct predictions were less than those

encountered by the Gross study. Differences which might account for the lack of replicability were discussed. These included: (a) questionnaire rather than interview data collection; (b) a requirement to report how respondents did act in fact, not how they wanted to act, or usually acted; and (c) uneven bureaucratic contests which "pitted" individuals against one another, i.e., parents against teachers and administrators, and administrators against teachers and students. In these contests, principals rarely resolved in favor of the parent. An impartial aspect of the study was an additional mode of resolution common to principal behavior which is in agreement with the Ritzer and Trice (1969) finding. The response is described as managing the conflict by eliminating it.

The primary focus of a study pertaining to personnel managers was a variation of Bailey's aforementioned subordinate conflict model. Ritzer and Trice (1969) analyzed two cases centered around six role conflict situations involving significant others (department manager, personnel manager, company executive, and immediate subordinate). After each conflict situation, respondents had five choices of behavior representing alternatives developed from the Gross study plus independent action, i.e., listen to both sides but make your own recommendations. Later, Ritzer expanded the concept of independent action.

Generally, research shows that a manager or official resolves a conflict by conforming to one expectation or another, by compromising, avoiding, or taking independent action. Within each of these types of conflict situations a wide array of particular actions may be included. For example, risk-taking is one way of exhibiting independent action, while "passing the buck" is an example of avoidance. Although these modes of resolution have been applied to managers and officials, they are equally applicable to any individual confronted with conflict - such as secondary administrators.

The literature of the past decade reflected both a more humanistic-oriented approach to conflict management, while, at the same time, additional studies were undertaken to examine subjective and objective components of management theory.

The theme of conflict as an unproductive force in American life, although a dominant view, has been balanced by the less publicized aspect of conflict as a means of bringing about healthy changes and growth in people and organizations. And nowhere is this more observable than in the administration of the nation's schools (Trusty, 1978).

Focusing on conflict management within the educational structure, Roark (1978) theorized that, regard-

less of the issue, the type of conflict, or what model may be used, five functions must be considered for constructive conflict management:

> (1) The intensity of the conflict must be reduced or kept low enough for constructive interaction.
>
> (2) The issues must be narrowed to one or two that can be used as a starting point.
>
> (3) Norms, rules, and structure must be available for nondestructive solutions to be adopted.
>
> (4) The real issues in the conflict must be uncovered and understood by all parties to the conflict.
>
> (5) Nonrealistic conflicts must be converted to realistic (issues or sources) conflicts so that objective goals can be agreed upon and "lose-lose" situations avoided. (p.402)

The literature has shown that interpersonal conflict and win-lose approaches are basic tenets in many administrative strategies for managing educational conflict. They emerge from a unique emphasis upon the role of the individual in a competitive society (Trusty, 1980). These constructs, along with an awareness of other conflictive, but functional organizational dynamics involving win-win strategies, form a basis for approaching the study of conflict and its management. Educational conflict is complex and involves a host of variables including personal values, human needs, organizational constraints, interpersonal relationships, allocation of roles,

statutes, and resources, and organizational objectives. Failure to understand that most educational conflicts occur where guidelines and structures are ambiguous and limited in effectiveness or are not agreed to by the parties involved; this leads to simplified interpretations of the conflict and the use of ineffective conflict management strategies.

The first task remains, according to Trusty, to admit that a conflict does in fact exist; the second, is to assess the situation; and the third, is to embark upon a conflict management approach.

According to Trusty's model (Figure 7), strategies which exist for managing educational conflict include avoidance and approach type strategies. Avoidance strategies recognize the importance of goals related to survival and conservation of resources. Approach strategies recognize the importance of goals related to control and problem solving.

Avoidance strategies are used to avoid, minimize, or restrict conflict; they deal with the conservation or maintenance of resources, and options include repression, conciliation, and resistance. The primary focus of these strategies is to protect what one has. Repression creates internal conflict within an educational setting, but seems to minimize the verbalization of feelings and attributes of situations that create conflict.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY MODEL

Denial — Acknowledgment — Involvement

Existence of Conflict

| Behaviors | Avoidance Strategies | | Approach Strategies | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Passive | Self-Survival | Conservation/Maintenance of Resources and Options | Control of People | Problem Solving |
| | 1. Withdrawal | 1. Repression | 1. Threats | 1. Isolation of Issue |
| | 2. Displacement | 2. Conciliation | 2. Manipulation | 2. Fact Finding |
| | | 3. Resistance | 3. Coercion (Authority) | 3. Smoothing |
| | | | 4. Deterrence | 4. Confrontation |
| | | | 5. Physical Aggression | 5. Mediation |
| | | | | 6. Compromise |
| Active | | | | |

Figure 7. An analysis of conflict management strategies along an Existence-of-Conflict scale, categorized by type of strategy.

Conciliation is an attempt to appease or deflect uninvited attention. Resistance is used when necessary to defend basic concerns and interests.

Approach strategies involve more active confrontations of people and/or situations. Trusty saw in this component a strategy effort which involved the control of people..

The most sophisticated approach strategy, according to Trusty's model, was in problem solving, which more frequently tends to produce win-win solutions. It essentially involves the isolation of issues, fact-finding, smoothing, confrontation, mediation, and compromise. Problem solving rests upon the conceptualization of human needs and how those needs are satisfied through symbols and delayed gratification systems. Problem solving, according to the [illegible]r, also focuses on the need to maintain a sense of structure and order within a social setting.

Another related viewpoint in this area was expressed by Jandt (1976) in which he presented a more simplified model of strategy analysis which he referred to as a "continuum of responses to conflict situations." (Figure 8)

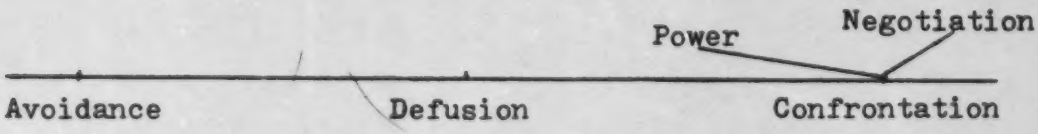



Figure 8, Jandt's Continuum of Responses to Conflict Situations

Herein, the researcher amplified the previously mentioned concepts of power and negotiation. Other writers, such as Derr (1975) and Tjosvold (1978), elaborated on these concepts in succeeding studies. Derr specifically saw the power strategist as one who manipulated and hoarded information: the principal who created conditions of uncertainty, who dealt in co-opting and self-interest and who based other people's perceptions of his potential power to gain favorable outcomes for himself -usually at the expense of others.

A detailed study of the process of negotiation in a high school setting was conducted by DeCecco and Richards (1974). These writers, in a study of urban secondary schools, outlined a process for conflict management by administrators that was disarmingly appealing in its simplicity. Their negotiation model consisted of three stages: (1) the statement of issues by each side; (2) agreement by each and all sides in a common statement of issues; (3) negotiating or bargaining in which all sides make concessions. To illustrate the importance of negotiation, examples were offered of actual high school conflicts among students, teachers, administrators, counselors, and parents. The authors emphasized that conflict must not be surpressed or avoided. While the work is a pioneer effort in its exploration of strategies of conflict man-

agement in an actual school environment, many of the specific examples fail to illustrate convincingly the dynamics of the authors' version of negotiation as a means of resolving tensions. Another facet of this study that has met with some objection on the part of observers is the contention that students must be given equal status in conflict negotiation and educational decision-making.

The literature reveals that researchers concluded that school related conflicts emerge when the social and emotional needs of students and other personnel are not met. Thus, if the formal school organization is to be as effective as possible, the informal organization within the school must be permitted to actualize as a means of meeting the social needs of members (Schein, 1965).

The informal organization most commonly emerging out of this school setting may be one of several types (Unger, 1978). There are "command" groups -personnel who are united by the fact that they are all subordinate to a particular authority (teachers as a group, students as a group, etc.). Another type is the "task" group -people who are close-knit because of a common function they perform (particular teachers, and custodians, cooks, etc.). A third group is the "interest" group whose members are brought together by mutual interests, hobbies, and tastes

(the "jocks," etc.). The fourth group is the "friendship" or "clique" associates which are composed of mutually similar acquaintances.

The secondary school administrator (the principal or assistant principal) faces conflicts in situations involving virtually all of the various formal and informal group subsets within the school. An underlying philosophy proferred by Pondy (1967) is that the management of opposing forces within a school environment is far superior to the compromising or the elimination of the forces.

Costanza (1975) suggested that the responses made to demands from constituencies determine the purposes of the school and the demands as well as the administrators' responses are both personal and societal. He further proferred that "administration is response, not reaction." Costanza recommended the following approaches on the part of high school administrators:

(1) know the level at which an issue is brought;

(2) know the level at which people will respond, and anticipate potential constituent reactions;

(3) know the attendant consequences;

(4) build mechanisms for dealing with constituent groups. (p.219)

In reviewing the elements and effects of conflict within a secondary school, Kelley(1970) has offered the following assumptions:

(1) conflict is inevitable;

(2) permanent suppression of conflict is impossible;

(3) conflict can be destructive or productive; a conflict-free setting is likely to stagnate, while one which is overloaded with conflict will be dysfunctional; a degree of conflict is necessary as a stimulus to creativity and vitality;

(4) people initiate conflict to effect a structural change; people respond to conflict initiated by others in order to maintain the status quo;

(5) a conflict can only be explained or analyzed in relation to the context or setting in which it occurs;

(6) the potential for conflict increases when there are increases in other factors, i.e., increased interdependence between individuals or agencies, increased interest in the behaviors and actions of an individual or organization by individuals and agencies external to the setting, and increased variety in the number or type of individuals or agencies impacted upon by the actions of an individual or organization. (p.12)

In conclusion, the research and literature on conflict management is varied - just as varied as human conflict itself. What can be safely said is that conflict exists within the individual (intrapersonal), around individuals (principal, teacher, parent, student), and

among formal and informal groups (administrators, teachers, parents, school committees). And for each of these levels of conflict which the administrator encounters daily, there is a theoretical base to the cause, existence, and methodology associated with a conflict. Much of the corresponding literature that would be of reference to an administrator has been cited in this chapter. But the variety of conflict and the approaches to its study can be slightly bewildering. A lack of coordination and cross-reference is strikingly evident in the literature and research. However, this is not so much a failing of academic discipline as it is of the essential complexity of human conflict, and perhaps ultimately, of human nature itself.

In brief, the "office" or "position" of the secondary assistant principal is the focal role for this study in conflict management theory and practice. The position, just as any other "division of labor" post within an organization can be described independently of and apart from the incumbent. The assistant principal's "rights," "obligations," and "prerogatives," — his role set — are a function of the general norms of several environments. These include norms of the larger school system, norms of the subsystem of the particular school, expecta-

tions of his role set, and the expectations which are self-perceived.

From a review of the literature, it is apparent that a study utilizing the theory of conflict management principles and practices has not been applied to a research group of this nature. Likewise, it appears that no attempts have been made to devise and test a research instrument and to present findings in a concise and inclusive manner. The present study, therefore, attempts to assess the theory and practice of conflict management in its present and historical context while assessing the behavior of Massachusetts secondary school assistant principals in conflict situations.

# CHAPTER THREE

## DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The study was designed to investigate (1) conflict management in a theoretical/historical perspective as examined from a study of the related literature; and (2) from a practical perspective as examined from the operative position of the secondary assistant principalship. The two concepts should not be considered as disparate, but rather as interrelated, for the one provides the framework for integrating the other.

By conducting research into the nature of conflict as seen in general educational terms, the setting is prepared for a further analysis into specific applications involving secondary school environs. To accomplish this, a two-part survey of all assistant principals in Massachusetts (listed by the Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Administrators) was undertaken. The surveys measured:

(a) the background, training, and intuitive opinions of assistant principals regarding conflict notions, procedures, and situations;

(b) the intervention style of the respondents to a series of case conflict analogies as presented in the Sexton-Bowerman Conflict-Handling Scale, as the respondents themselves perceive them.

A third objective of the study was to develop, as a result and finding of the research, a "manual" or "primer" in conflict management procedures which may be of use as a reference tool by administrators.

The empirical phase of the study presented two basic phases for analysis: what is the professional background of secondary administrators in relation to their formalized preparation for conflict situations in which they are involved on a regular basis; and how do these individuals react in conflict situations? In this latter regard, designations elaborated in Sexton-Bowerman's article in the NASSP Bulletin (April, 1979) were used:

> Role Conflict. This category is sociological in nature and deals with the role of the person. Because the administrator is forced by his role to be conscious of the school and its policies, conflict is frequently centered around institutional expectations. Therefore, the administrator often is required to censor the needs of individual members of the staff.
>
> Power Conflict. Power conflict is a psychological confrontation dealing with the personalities of the individuals involved. The power-play may be obvious, as in coercive power, or very subtle and even potentially more dangerous.
>
> Crisis Conflict. This kind of conflict usually occurs when external situations are suddenly "dumped upon" the administrator. They are characterized by the immediacy of the problem situation and demand an accelerated response to reach a solution.

> Maintenance Conflict. Maintenance conflicts are the scores of everyday, internal problems. Administrators spend a good deal of time in coping with routine matters and the resulting quantities of small, irritating conflicts, which, if not addressed, can multiply, gather force, and develop into crisis situations. (p. 1, 2).

Ascertaining the background, training, and opinions of secondary assistant principals was accomplished by means of a questionnaire (Table 1) which was initially developed at the annual convention of the American Federation of Teachers in Detroit, Michigan, in August of 1980. Eight meetings were scheduled over a period of ten days which invited and involved the active participation of over one hundred teachers and administrators from all parts of the United States. The sessions were structurally informal and consisted of a broad range of dialogue directed at cultivating information-producting responses on the part of administrators regarding conflict concepts. During the process, regular editing of suggestions involving each proposed question was related to the conceptual framework of the study.

Ziegler's (1980) methodology in accepting and rejecting questions was utilized. For each question proposed, several questions were additionally asked; among them were:

## Table 1. A Conflict Questionnaire



Please underline all responses- (where applicable)

1) Number of years as an assistant principal: (a) more than 15; (b) between 10 and 14; (c) between 5 and 9; (d) under 5

2) The highest earned degree you possess: (a) Bachelor's; (b) Master's; (c) Master's plus credit hours; (d) Doctorate

3) Present age in years: (a) over 50; (b) between 35 and 50; (c) under 35

4) Do you consider the position of assistant principal to be: (a) transitory; (b) permanent

5) The size of your school district: (a) over 5000; (b) between 2500 and 5000; (c) between 1000 and 2500; (d) under 1000

6) Please rank the major sources of conflict with which you deal on a regular basis-on a scale of 1 (highest) to 4 (lowest): (a)____ students; (b)____ parents; (c)_____ teachers; (d)_____ administrators/supervisors

7) Overall, do you feel that in your professional training you received adequate instruction in the area of conflict management: (a) yes; (b) no

8) More particularly, do you feel that your professional preparation adequately laid the foundation for conflict situations which you have encountered with:
   (1) students: (a) yes; (b) no
   (2) parents: (a) yes; (b) no
   (3) teachers: (a) yes; (b) no
   (4) administrators/supervisors: (a) yes; (b) no

9) Do you feel that conflict is inherently harmful to an educational system?
   (a) yes; (b) no; (c) uncertain

10) Were you to design a graduate program in educational administration, would you include a component on conflict management as: (a) an elective; (b) a requirement; (c) not at all

11) At this stage of your career, if you had the opportunity to elect some form of instruction in conflict management, would you do so? (a) yes; (b) no; (c) uncertain

12) If the answer to the previous question is "yes" would you please rank from 1 (highest) to 4 (lowest) the following alternatives:
   (a)____a semester course; (b)____more than a semester course;
   (c)____a workshop; (d)____an inservice course of instruction

13) If a handbook or "primer" in conflict management were to be made available to you, do you feel that you would make use of it for an occasional reference or guide? (a) yes; (b) no; (c) uncertain

1. Is the question necessary? How does is measure the variable intended?
2. Are more questions needed about the subject of the question? Is the class of variables listed in the framework well or inadequately treared?
3. Does the question adequately cover the ground intended?
4. Do respondents have the information necessary to adequately cover the ground intended?
5. Does the question need to be more specific, concrete, and more closely linked to personal experiences?
6. Can the information be more easily obtained by another method?
7. Is the question biased or loaded?
8. Do the respondents provide the information anticipated in the framework?
9. Is the wording objectionable in any way?
10. Should the question provide for a checked answer (closed) or a free answer, with a probe in a free answer format?
11. Is the probe too detailed? Not detailed enough?
12. Is the question properly placed in a correct "psychological order." Is it led up to in a natural way? (p.79,80)

Beside question analogy, time was also spent in a preliminary analysis of the data utilizing the responses of varied participants. This investigation enabled the writer to examine whether or not the theoretical underpinings of the study actually had a basis in the experien-

ces of secondary school administrators. In other words, are secondary administrators sufficiently unalike in their professional and personal resources and administrative positions to suggest the utility of comparative research for understanding conflict management behavior? The preliminary analysis showed that indeed the comparison of conflict management behavior of secondary administrators is a worthwhile and important area for study.

An issue that was given much attention during the Detroit sessions was centered around the supposition of including definitions of such terms as "conflict," "conflict resolution," or "conflict management" within the questionnaire. A good deal of debate ensued relative to this subject with at least 30 proposed definitions being offered. After much discussion, the general consensus was that the concepts should be relatively understood by educational administrators to be a form of incompatibility of personal or organizational goals. The consensus also suggested that the further imposition of an arbitrary definition of terms upon respondents might tend to slant the otherwise candid opinions which were intended to be solicited. It was also surmised by the groups attending these formative sessions that a simple scanning of the included materials by any potential respondent should relieve any doubt or uncertainty as to the purpose of the exercise.

As a concluding comment on this point, the groups were in agreement that the project should not be a polemic on what was or was not a conflict. The objective of the survey was to sample the knowledge, readiness, and disposition of a number of practicing administrators concerning conflict management principles and practices. As such, if true respondent opinions were anticipated, any arbitrary structuring of the questionnaire along the lines of injecting debatable definitions should be avoided.

Additional refining of the questionnaire was accomplished in 1980-81 during the Summer and Fall semesters at Salem State College. Graduate seminars in educational administration, in which approximately fifty graduate students participated, culminated in producing the finished product. This instrument, along with the Sexton-Bowerman inventory, was administered during September and October of 1981. It was in these seminars that the suggestion was made and accepted to restrict the study to secondary school assistant principals. The reasoning was two-fold: (1) it was felt that the author was familiar with this segment of educational administration, since he had been an assistant principal for the past six years; and (2) it was thought that this particular cluster of individuals would respond more favorably to a survey than other secondary administrators. While this may have been more of a conjecture than

a scientific conclusion, the proposition at least served the purpose of reducing the number of potential respondents to a manageable whole.

The cited state administrators' association listed in its 1980-81 roster of membership some 171 public secondary school assistant principals. This entire number was surveyed in the study with 122 (or approximately 72%) responding with usable results. Other percentage breakdowns (incompletes, rejections, non-reporting) are presented in Chapter Four. The materials included the questionnaire, an introductory letter, the Sexton-Bowerman Scale, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope for returning the survey.

No significance was attached to the sex of the respondents since the Association numbered only nine female assistant principals in Massachusetts. This is the prime reason why the questionnaire incorporated no mention of sex, nor did the study attempt to statistically draw any inferences from so small a population.

Finally, the study was directed to the public school sector. Private schools, and preparatory schools, it was thought, would present additional dimensions and parameters of interest, opinion, and administration which would complicate the generalizability of the findings.

The results of the questionnaire catalogued various statistical profiles of secondary assistant principals in Massachusetts. Experience, age, and educational attainment were tabulated along with size of school district. Attitudinal questions drew a focus on such topics as permanence of position, adequacy of training in conflict skills, and involvement in conflict situations. A detailed frequency analysis of the data was compiled and is considered in depth in Chapter Four.

It is an objective of the writer to present a comparison of the demographic and attitudinal results summarized in the questionnaire with the style of intervention (willingness to intervene versus actual intervention) gleaned from the Sexton-Bowerman subscales ( Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5). Generally, the questionnaire provided the range of independent variables, and Sexton-Bowerman offered the scope of dependent variables.

A problem involving procedure arose in connection with the Sexton-Bowerman scales, which, in the opinion of the writer required some attention in order to preserve research integrity. Earlier, a survey of the literature revealed that no instrument – with the exception of Sexton-Bowerman— had been created which was geared to the unique nature of conflict-handling in educational adminis-

## CONFLICT-HANDLING for EDUCATIONAL LEADERS
### Secondary School Principal and Assistant School Principal Version

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Each item in the following self-test describes an aspect of administrative behavior as you interact with students and colleagues. Rate each question on both scales by circling the number which best represents your opinion. If you circle 1, this means you have a strong preference for the choice on the left; 5 means you have a strong preference for the choice on the right.

Role Conflict

1. The English teacher comes into your office and claims that the band director is writing too many passes to get students out of the classroom.

| You would: | | | Tell them | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

2. A student has talked to one of the counselors about a teacher's problems in classroom discipline. The teacher involved has found out and comes to your office to report the problem. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

3. The librarian is complaining that teachers are "dumping their students" in the library and expecting him to assume their workload. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

4. Your secretary is in conflict with one of your faculty over class attendance rosters. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

5. A delegation from student government has come to your office requesting additional candy machines. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## TABLE 3, POWER CONFLICT

6. The football coach is demanding more "release time" for his players from the school day. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

7. Your school is in competition with another school for a new program. In dealing with your superior, you would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

8. Other teachers have complained to you that a certain science teacher is taking the students on too many field trips. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

9. A teacher is not performing his cafeteria duty effectively and you find out it is because he resents the additional appointment. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

10. An organized group in the community demands that a list of books be removed from the school library. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## TABLE 4. CRISIS CONFLICT

11. A "hot parent" comes in and threatens legal action because his child was assaulted on the school grounds. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

12. There have been a number of unsubstantiated reports that one of your teachers is involving students in homosexual acts. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

13. When one of your good woodshop teachers went to the lounge for a quick cup of coffee a student injured himself seriously. You call in the teacher and you:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

14. You've heard that damaging and incorrect information about your school has been reported to your superior. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

15. You wander onto the practice field and see a coach hitting one of his players. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

## TABLE 5. MAINTENANCE CONFLICT

16. You receive a report that the custodian refuses to fix the shades in one of the teacher's rooms. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

17. Your secretary said that a teacher has not turned in his gradebook. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

18. A teacher has called in sick very late for a substitute teacher. This teacher has done this in the past. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

19. A student has requested to the counselor that he be transferred to another section because of a personality conflict with the teacher. There seems to be no discipline problem involved, but this is the third request from that student. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

20. A teacher has complained that your secretary is blocking access to you. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

tration. Such sources as the Eighth Mental Measurements Yearbook (1976) and the Directory of Unpublished Experimental Measures (Vol. 2, 1978) were devoid of offerings, although the Yearbook was in the process of investigating the test data for Sexton-Bowerman for a report in its next publication. Inquiries to the authors and to the publications in which the scales appeared produced little in the way of norming results. An exception to this paucity of information was a release from Texas A. & M. University (where Dr. Sexton was a professor of educational administration) which reported that about 1,000 secondary school administrators had taken part in the initial studies, and pre-test, post-test Pearson reliability coefficients in the range of .7[illegible] to .87 were collected.

In the absence of more detailed technical documentation, the writer determined that an item reliability test of the eight Sexton-Bowerman scales was in order. These results, along with the following additional statistical procedures, are presented in Chapter Four:

(1) analysis of variance on each of the subscale totals by the designated demographic variables (numbers 1, 3, 7, and 13 in the questionnaire, Table 1);

(2) two-way crosstabulations of the individual items within each subscale (Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5) by the demographic variables (questions 1,3,7, and 13) to produce Chi Square values; also ANOVA's were attempted in a similar manner in order to supplement categorical crosstabulation data.

(3) Pearson correlations were run in order to compare all subscales against each other- a form of item reliability verification.

In addition, frequency totals on all variables were run in order to produce counts, means, standard deviations, modes, medians, minimums, maximums, skewness, etc. Also, two-way crosstabulations of demographic data were processed with the intent of providing population distributions and descriptions.

All the data collected by the investigator were treated to accept or reject the null hypotheses. If these hypotheses were rejected, the alternate corresponding hypothesis would be examined for implication. The Hypotheses followed:

H1 The variables of age and experience are significantly correlated to methods of intervention style.

H1.1 The greater the age and experience, the greater the correlation with the authoritarian style of intervention.

H1.2 The lower the age and experience, the greater the correlation with the egalatarian style of intervention.

H2 There is a direct relationship between responses regarding willingness to intervene with responses regarding style of intervention.

H3 There is a direct relationship between the confidence level (as expressed by respondent opinions

regarding adequate training in conflict management) and the egalatarian style of intervention.

H4 There is a direct relationship between the confidence level (as expressed by respondent opinions regarding inadequate training in conflict management) and the authoritarian style of intervention.

Questions 1, 3, 7, and 13 form variable blocks: number of years as an assistant principal, age, attitude regarding adequacy of conflict management training, attitude regarding usage of a manual or primer in conflict management; they were examined against the Sexton-Bowerman subscales of willingness to intervene versus intervention style in order to determine significance at the .05 level. This was done in the four separate categories: role conflict, power conflict, crisis conflict, and maintenance conflict.

Venn diagrams and bar graphs supplemented sub-program tables, matrices, and distributions in order to illustrate the degree of incremental variance and the degree of variance mutually shared by paired and group variables.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## FINDINGS PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The following sections report the major findings relevant to the present study. Frequency distributions for behavioral choices, demographics, professional preparation, and conflict training attitudes are presented in the opening sections. Confidence levels (in terms of adequacy of training in conflict management) are given additional treatment in providing a framework for analyzing the hypotheses.

The Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Administrators in 1980-81 reported that there were 171 public secondary school assistant principals, including the researcher, on its roster. The Association supplied to the researcher a listing which included names, addresses, and schools. The questionnaire and the Sexton-Bowerman scale were sent to all assistant principals in the state of Massachusetts. The number returned was 122-which was a 72% response (see Table 6).

TABLE 6
Surveys Returned

| Survey | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Sent | 170 | 100 |
| Returned | 122 | 72 |
| Used | 119 | 70 |
| Unusable | 3 | 1.8 |

Three returns were judged to be unusable. One respondent actually checked off virtually every option in the survey, while two others reported that, while they were interested in the subject of conflict management, the fact that they were recent appointees convinced them that their answers would not be in the best interest of the study.

The first five items in the questionnaire (Appendix B, Tables 6-11) set the tone for determining the age, experience, stabilization, and size of the school district in which the assistant principals are employed. The remaining items refer to attitudinal responses which are the later subjects of analysis.

Nearly one-half the number of respondents (47.9%) declared that they had occupied their positions for from 10 to 14 years (questionnaire item number 1). This grouping is presented to show a comparison of experience profiles and is displayed in Table 7.

TABLE 7

Years As An Assistant Principal

| | Absolute Freq. | Relative Freq. (pct) | Adjusted Freq. (pct) | Cum. Freq. (pct) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) more than 15 | 15 | 12.6 | 12.6 | 12.6 |
| (b) between 10 and 14 | 57 | 47.9 | 47.9 | 60.5 |
| (c) between 5 and 9 | 22 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 79.0 |
| (d) under 5 | 25 | 21.0 | 21.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 119 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Advanced academic training beyond the Bachelor's level is revealed in Table 8 (questionnaire item 2). A noticeable skewness can be seen in the Master's plus credit hours column, where nearly 90% of assistant principals are located.

TABLE 8

Highest Earned Degree

| | Absolute Freq. | Relative Freq. (pct) | Adjusted Freq.(pct) | Cum. Freq. (pct) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) Bachelor's | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (b) Master's | 8 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 6.7 |
| (c) Master's Plus Credit Hours | 107 | 89.9 | 89.9 | 96.6 |
| (d) Doctorate | 4 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 100.0 |

The age category (questionnaire item 3) is exhibited in Table 9. Of particular notice is the classification of grouping between the ages of 35 and 50. More than 2 out of every 3 assistant principals are recorded in this bracket.

TABLE 9

Present Age in Years

| | Absolute Freq. | Relative Freq.(pct) | Adjusted Freq.(pct) | Cum.Freq. (pct) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) over 50 | 31 | 26.1 | 26.1 | 26.1 |
| (b) between 35-50 | 80 | 67.2 | 67.2 | 93.3 |
| (c) under 35 | 8 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 119 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Questionnaire item 4 asked for an opinion of permanence of position regarding the assistant principalship (Table 10). Especially revealing in this category is that nearly half (42.9%) the number of respondents considered the position to be permanent. One individual added a comment of "undecided" and is also computed in the frequency totals.

TABLE 10

Consideration of Position

| | Absolute Freq. | Relative Freq.(pct) | Adjusted Freq.(pct) | Cum.Freq. (pct) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) Transitory | 67 | 56.3 | 56.8 | 56.8 |
| (b) Permanent | 51 | 42.9 | 43.2 | 100.0 |
| | 119 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The size of the school district (questionnaire item 5) is reported as discriptive information and is included without comment in Table 11. Also, an analysis of this particular demographic component was not treated in the hypotheses.

TABLE 11

Size of School District

| | Absolute Freq. | Relative Freq.(pct) | Adjusted Freq.(pct) | Cum.Freq. (pct) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (a) over 5000 | 18 | 15.1 | 15.1 | 15.1 |
| (b) between 2500 and 5000 | 56 | 47.1 | 47.1 | 62.2 |
| (c) between 1000 and 2500 | 34 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 90.8 |
| (d) under 1000 | 11 | 9.2 | 9.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 119 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

In terms of establishing a ranking order of the sources of conflict (questionnaire item 6) with which assistant principals are involved on a regular basis, some 97 (81.5%) of the respondents listed students as the major source of conflict. Parents, teachers, and other administrators/supervisors followed with percentage frequencies of 6.7, 3.4, and 4.2 in that order. Allowance was made for responses to be entered in a prioritized manner in which the opportunity was presented to rank each of the other categories. Interestingly, only 6.5% of the respondents would list teachers as the major source of conflict, parents only 2.5% and other administrators as .8%.

Of the 119 usable responses, 82 (68.9%) reported that they had inadequate training in conflict management instruction (questionnaire item 7). Some 37 (31.1%) answered this item in the affirmative. This question was crosstabulated with the Sexton-Bowerman scale according to a confidence versus no confidence application. An analysis of this is presented later in the chapter during the hypotheses testing phase of the study.

Relative to this last point, besides adequacy of training which involved hypotheses investigation, other items which were the subject of hypotheses in the second phase of the study were the questions of age and experience.

Question number 8 provided a further breakdown of confidence levels regarding adequacy in conflict management. In the first category (students), 70 respondees (58.8%) declared their inadequacy of training in conflict situations. On the other hand, 49 (41.2%) felt confident concerning the adequacy of their training. Regarding parents, some 80 respondees (67.2%) reported inadequacy of training as against 38 (31.9%) who considered themselves adequately prepared. A similar breakdown occurred with respect to the third category (teachers) wherein 77 (64.7%) reported inadequacy as compared to 41 (34.5%) who felt confident about their training. Completing the categories, some 71 (59.7%) considered their training in conflict management to be inadequate for situations involving other administrators/supervisors, while 48 (40.3%) reported a confidence rating.

Continuing with questionnaire frequence responses, some 96 assistant principals (80.4%) did not consider conflict to be inherently harmful to an educational system (questionnaire, item 9). Only 14 individuals in the survey (11.8%) appeared to regard conflict as inherently harmful, while 9 respondees (7.6%) were undecided.

Questionnaire, item 10: "Were you to design a graduate program in educational administration, would you include a component on conflict management as (a) an elective, (b) a requirement, or (c) not at all " brought the following

responses: fully 104 (87.4%) of the respondees declared that they would make conflict management a requirement; 15 (12.6%) would offer conflict management as an elective, while none of the respondents (0%) would not include some component of conflict management in a graduate program.

Questionnaire, item 11 revealed that 83 (69.7%) of the respondents would opt to elect some form of instruction in conflict management at this stage of their career. Another 25 (21.0%) declared they would not take such a course, and 11 (9.2%) were undecided.

Scattered results were reported relative to the type of instructional course which would be elected. Of the number reporting this factor, 26 (21.8%) felt that a semester course would be their first choice, while 33 (27.7%) regarded an in-service course as most preferable.

The last item in the questionnaire posed the proposition to assistant principals that if a handbook or primer in conflict management were to be made available would they make use of it as an occasional reference? Some 94 (79.0%) declared that they would utilize such an informational tool, 9 (7.6%) reported that they would not, and 15 (12.6%) were undecided.

Before proceeding to an examination of findings regarding the Sexton-Bowerman Scale, the researcher determined that a reliability analysis of the items was appropriate. This was thought to be necessary because of the scarcity of norming data which accompanied the scale. A covariance matrix utilizing the SPSS Batch System Release was constructed for each of the eight scales. The vertical linear scale for each of the types of conflict (willingness to intervene) was coded as Role A, Power A, Crisis A, and Maintenance A. The horizontal linear scale (style of intervention) was coded as Role B, Power B, Crisis B, and Maintenance B. Subsets of item analysis, which correlated each scale against itself were calculated in order to produce reliability coefficients. An analysis of variance followed.

Because some of the respondents did not provide complete answers to all items on both the vertical and horizontal scales (left and right as they are presented in the instrument), only those that were fully complete were included in the reliability analysis. The "N" in each of the following reliability results are those that answered all 5 components of the scale.

TABLE 12

Sexton-Bowerman Reliability Results

| Scale | Alpha Value | N |
|---|---|---|
| Role A | .80321 | 95 |
| Role B | .25319 | 94 |
| Power A | .71696 | 89 |
| Power B | .52558 | 87 |
| Crisis A | .71336 | 94 |
| Crisis B | .63347 | 88 |
| Maintenance A | .71038 | 93 |
| Maintenance B | .51807 | 88 |

The Alpha values of reliability are the final products of a lengthly analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure. The computerized output necessary to produce these results required 32 separate pages of statistical data. Only the summary is presented in Table 12 in order to draw a focus to reliability coefficients. More detailed data appears in the appendices.

The literature suggests that internal consistency reliability is significant when Alpha ratios are computed at a .5 level or higher (Guilford and Fruchter, 1978). In applying such an interpretation to the present study, it may be seen that Sexton's "Role B" reliability of .25319 is questionable in terms of internal consistency and item reliability. Actually, all of Sexton's "B" scales deserve scrutiny, but, since the Crisis B scale produced the highest reliability it is the model used for hypotheses testing.

What might be surmised here is that in engaging in a conflict situation which involves a role function, assistant principals do use an actual style of intervention which is relatively inconsistent in terms of an application model. The range between an authoritarian ("tell them how to handle the situation") to egalitarian ("facilitate discussion, decide by all parties having equal influence") fluctuates too greatly to be considered as indicators of reliable response.

With the foregoing as a setting within which to consider conclusions regarding the reliability of the Sexton-Bowerman Scale, a return to a total frequency analysis of results is appropriate. The following tables report a Likert-type rating of 1 through 5 on a linear determinant. The "A" scales range along a vertical grid pattern from avoidance to action taking, while the "B" scales span a horizontal continuum from the authoritarian to the egalitarian.

TABLE 13

Role (A): Willingness to Intervene

| Situation | N | Mean | Median | S. Dev. | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 119 | 4.271 | 4.701 | 1.178 | 1.388 |
| 2 | 119 | 4.118 | 4.573 | 1.205 | 1.451 |
| 3 | 119 | 4.448 | 4.761 | 1.019 | 1.038 |
| 4 | 119 | 4.702 | 4.894 | 0.808 | 1.065 |
| 5 | 119 | 4.218 | 4.685 | 1.197 | 1.432 |

The results of Table 13 suggest a sharp, positive willingness to intervene in a role conflict situation. Assistant principals, it would appear, when acting within their role responsibilities, indicate a readiness to take action and assume risks.

TABLE 14

Power (A): Willingness to Intervene

| Situation | N | Mean | Median | S. Dev. | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 119 | 4.777 | 4.891 | 0.565 | 0.319 |
| 2 | 119 | 4.371 | 4.730 | 1.034 | 1.069 |
| 3 | 119 | 4.117 | 4.612 | 1.270 | 1.614 |
| 4 | 119 | 4.845 | 4.927 | 0.492 | 0.242 |
| 5 | 119 | 4.021 | 4.649 | 1.436 | 2.062 |

Table 14 presents a summary with overall frequency statistics similar in pattern to Role A conflict situations. The most striking example of a willingness to take a risk in a situation is item 4, wherein the assistant principal reproaches a teacher for not performing an administrative cafeteria duty.

TABLE 15

Crisis (A): Willingness to Intervene

| Situation | N | Mean | Median | S. Dev. | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 119 | 4.661 | 4.835 | 0.723 | 0.523 |
| 2 | 119 | 4.312 | 4.810 | 1.260 | 1.587 |
| 3 | 119 | 4.761 | 4.914 | 0.679 | 0.461 |
| 4 | 119 | 4.440 | 4.819 | 1.084 | 1.175 |
| 5 | 119 | 4.783 | 4.936 | 0.685 | 0.470 |

Most noteworthy in the returns concerning Table 15 is the singular response involving a crisis conflict situation in which the administrator sees a coach striking one of his players. A total of 102 (85.7%) in item 5 report that they would take full responsibility and assume risk in this instance.

TABLE 16

Maintenance (A): Willingness to Intervene

| Situation | N | Mean | Median | S.Dev. | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 119 | 4.616 | 4.878 | 0.961 | 0.923 |
| 2 | 119 | 4.604 | 4.862 | 0.917 | 0.841 |
| 3 | 119 | 4.518 | 4.676 | 0.759 | 0.576 |
| 4 | 119 | 4.071 | 4.600 | 1.272 | 1.617 |
| 5 | 119 | 4.400 | 4.791 | 1.097 | 1.201 |

The overall results reported in Table 16 revealed a slightly lower mean and median, but a consistently high skewness relative to risk-taking.

Moving to the horizontal continuum of the Sexton-Bowerman scale, the intervention style of the respondents is presented in Tables 17-20.

TABLE 17

Role (B): Intervention Style

| Situation | N | Mean | Median | S. Dev. | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 119 | 3.843 | 4.553 | 1.492 | 2.227 |
| 2 | 119 | 3.477 | 3.486 | 1.327 | 1.761 |
| 3 | 119 | 3.769 | 4.553 | 1.534 | 2.353 |
| 4 | 119 | 2.879 | 3.313 | 1.534 | 2.353 |
| 5 | 119 | 3.000 | 3.273 | 1.743 | 3.036 |

Table 17 was a signal to the researcher that reliability analysis was critical to the continuation of the study. The analysis of variance that was taken in regard to this particular scale produced a reliability index of only .25319 (see Table 12). The large variance factors which were also revealed (Table 17) led to a rejection of this particular component of the scale. Another finding which contributed to reliability rejection was that the frequencies represented were virtually bimodal in nature.

TABLE 18

Power (B): Intervention Style

| Situation | N | Means | Median | S. Dev. | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 119 | 2.653 | 2.672 | 1.429 | 2.043 |
| 2 | 119 | 4.349 | 4.743 | 1.083 | 1.174 |
| 3 | 119 | 3.931 | 4.170 | 1.185 | 1.405 |
| 4 | 119 | 2.337 | 1.360 | 1.752 | 3.071 |
| 5 | 119 | 4.306 | 4.779 | 1.234 | 1.524 |

The conflict situations in the Power B series reveal a tendency towards the authoritarian style of intervention, particularly in items 1 and 4. This pairing of responses is compared to the vertical scale (Power A) which shows a high risk-taking posture.

TABLE 19

Crisis (B): Intervention Style

| Situation | N | Mean | Median | S. Dev. | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 119 | 3.939 | 4.276 | 1.308 | 1.711 |
| 2 | 119 | 2.980 | 2.964 | 1.761 | 3.102 |
| 3 | 119 | 2.099 | 1.265 | 1.658 | 2.750 |
| 4 | 119 | 3.950 | 4.607 | 1.445 | 2.088 |
| 5 | 119 | 2.247 | 1.336 | 1.702 | 2.896 |

Citing another example, in item 3 of Table 19, an authoritarian style is revealed when an assistant principal and a teacher are engaged in conflict concerning a dereliction of duty.

TABLE 20

Maintenance (B): Intervention Style

| Situation | N | Mean | Median | S. Dev. | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 119 | 2.082 | 1.336 | 1.505 | 2.264 |
| 2 | 119 | 2.320 | 1.974 | 1.335 | 1.782 |
| 3 | 119 | 2.505 | 2.558 | 1.466 | 2.148 |
| 4 | 119 | 4.222 | 4.770 | 1.335 | 1.782 |
| 5 | 119 | 2.485 | 1.650 | 1.665 | 2.773 |

The generally lower dispersion findings in Table 20 appear to indicate the preference for assistant principals to exercise authoritarian intervention styles in maintenance situations. Of particular note is the administrative/custodial conflict which occurs in item number 1.

A second phase of empirical analysis involved an investigation of the stated hypothesse. These findings, using the Crisis scale for testing the first, third, and fourth hypotheses, follow presently; tables 13-20 were compressed to yield data which contributed to the second.

Hypotheses

H1 The variables of age and experience are significantly correlated to methods of intervention style.

H1.1 The greater the age and experience, the greater the correlation with the authoritarian style of intervention.

H1.2 The lower the age and experience, the greater the correlation with the egalitarian style of intervention.

H1 was intended to demonstrate significant correlations of age and experience with intervention style. Relative statistical data are presented in Table 21. Adequacy of preparation was included in order to provide an additional dimension of comparison at this juncture and as composite references for H3 and H4 which follow later in this chapter. It should be noted that age and experience, while often linked in the same phraseology, were actually separated into two distinct statistical categories.

TABLE 21

Chi Square and Pearson Correlations: Crisis Scale

| Crisis | Age | Experience | Adequacy |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 16.39 (.037) | 18.90 (.091) | 17.20 (,002) |
| | -.07 (.243) | -.19 (.029) | -.11 (.128) |
| 2 | 26.83 (.001) | 20.09 (.065) | 10.83 (.029) |
| | -.24 (.009) | .03 (.384) | -.20 (.025) |
| 3 | 6.92 (.545) | 16.85 (.155) | 2.47 (.650) |
| | -.20 (.022) | -.10 (.151) | -.13 (.095) |
| 4 | 3.73 (.881) | 15.99 (.192) | 13.51 (.009) |
| | .01 (.443) | -.23 (.011) | .33 (.004) |
| 5 | 20.76 (.008) | 12.40 (.414) | 7.97 (.093) |
| | -.27 (.004) | 0.00 (.491) | -.22 (.016) |

The first entry in each row is Chi Square with the significance in parenthesis; under each Chi Square is Pearson's correlation ("r") with the significance in parenthesis. SPSS systems present significances as computed and allow the observer to interpret for particular ratios, such as .05 and .01.

Referring to Table 21, it will be observed that age and experience provided inconsistent results. In crisis situation 1, the age significance is reasonable significant (.037), but experience is not (.091). Similarly, 2 and 5 have fairly acceptable significances, but experience varies. Both crises 3 and 4 have neither correlative or significance readings, and negative correlations contribute to an inverse rather than direct support for the hypotheses.

Findings reproduced in Table 21 present an overall challenge to the hypothsese. Utilizing the Crisis scale as an example, Chi Square and Pearson Correlations indicated no consistent significance of findings. In depth analysis of variance calculations produced even less significant results. SPSS computerization compressed the categorical qualities of age, experience, and adequacy of preparation in a combination of statistical procedures which included crosstabulations and variation analyses involving relative significances. Crosstabs provided a profitable frame of reference since a limitation of ANOVA stipulated that the combined categories of investigation must be less than the sample size (Nie, 1978). In this presentation, the combined totals of variables which could conceivably range over a multiple continuum would produce more cellular categories than the reported cases. Also, Nie stated that ANOVA is not preferable as a procedure if the interaction effect is expected to be nil (p.403). A combination of crosstabulation results along with a low reliability finding of the "B" scales (Table 12) suggest this additional weakness.

In the composite Table 21, age breakdown (in three categories: over 50, between 35 and 50, and under 35), experience (in four categories: greater than 15, between 35 and 50, and under 35), experience (in four categories: greater than 15, between 10-14, between 5-9, and less than

5), and adequacy of conflict management training (yes, no) were crosstabulated both within cell category and against each other. Frequency analysis in each crosstabulation produced no consistent pattern capable of warranting generalizations. It would appear that the assistant principals reacted to the separate conflict situations in a widely dispersed manner to the degree that significant findings were not conclusive according to the proposed categories of age, experience, and adequacy of training. Similar results (reported in the appendices) were obtained in the Power and Maintenance intervention scales, while the Role scale produced even wider dispersion patterns. This latter finding was reasonably predictable if one recalls that an analysis of variance of this scale showed a lack of internal consistency and item reliability.

In reference to H1.1 and H1.2, Table 22 is an example of an age and experience profile established for investigating possible relationships of these categories against the authoritarian/egalitarian scale. Again, the adequacy of training crosstabs are included to provide a wider scope of analysis.

Rather than supporting the sub-hypotheses, it will be noted that as age and experience <u>increase</u> there is a more direct relationship with the <u>egalitarian</u> end of the continuum. This tendency occurs throughout the various

TABLE 22

An Example of Crosstabulations of a Crisis Situation

| count / percent | Adequacy | | | Experience | | | | | Age | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Crisis 1 | Yes | No | Total | 15+ | 10-14 | 5-9 | -5 | Total | 50+ | 35-50 | -35 | Total |
| 1 | 4 | 9 | 13 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 13 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 13 |
| | 13.3 | 13.0 | 13.1 | 8.3 | 5.9 | 18.8 | 30.0 | 13.1 | 12.5 | 11.9 | 25.0 | 13.1 |
| 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | 0.0 | 1.4 | 1.0 | 0.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 | 4.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| 3 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 6 |
| | 10.0 | 4.3 | 6.1 | 8.3 | 2.0 | 12.5 | 10.0 | 6.1 | 4.2 | 7.5 | 0.0 | 6.1 |
| 4 | 3 | 35 | 38 | 5 | 27 | 3 | 3 | 38 | 4 | 33 | 1 | 38 |
| | 10.0 | 50.7 | 38.4 | 41.7 | 52.9 | 18.8 | 15.0 | 38.4 | 16.7 | 49.3 | 12.5 | 38.4 |
| 5 | 20 | 21 | 41 | 5 | 19 | 8 | 9 | 41 | 15 | 21 | 5 | 41 |
| | 66.7 | 30.4 | 41.4 | 41.7 | 37.3 | 50. | 45.0 | 41.4 | 62.5 | 31.3 | 62.5 | 41.4 |
| Total: Count | 30 | 69 | 99 | 12 | 51 | 16 | 20 | 99 | 24 | 67 | 8 | 99 |
| Percent | 30.3 | 69.7 | 100.0 | 12.1 | 51.5 | 16.2 | 20.2 | 100.0 | 24.2 | 67.7 | 8.1 | 100.0 |

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conflict situations, and Table 22 is typical of many more that could be presented to reveal the same conclusions. Regarding H1.2, the lower the age and experience, the tendency is to disperse over the entire continuum, thus further reducing the possibilities of sustaining the sub-hypothesis. Extensive computerized data revealed that the dispersal patterns demonstrated in Tables 21 and 22 occur throughout all of the intervention scales. Additional reference tables are included in the appendices.

The second hypothesis attempted to relate both of Sexton's A and B scales. The hypothesis follows:

H2 There is a direct relationship between responses regarding willingness to intervent with responses regarding style of intervention.

A critical ratio test was applied in deference to the standard $t$ test because of the size of the sample. "CR" is the ratio between the differences of two statistics and the standard error of their difference. The formula (which was used in Table 23) is stated:

$$CR = \frac{S_x - S_y}{SE_{sx-sy}}$$

The higher the value obtained for CR, the more significant is the difference between the statistics (Yuker, 1958). Table 23 compresses data analyzed earlier in tables 13-20.

TABLE 23

Critical Ratio Testing of Hypothesis 2

| Role A | | | Role B | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grand Mean | SE | (Diff.) | Grand Mean | SE | (Diff.) | CR |
| 4.351 | | .1051 | 3.294 | | .1262 | 45.571 |
| Power A | | | Power B | | | |
| 4.426 | | .0952 | 3.515 | | .6121 | 1.761 |
| Crisis A | | | Crisis B | | | |
| 4.591 | | .0846 | 3.587 | | .1582 | 14.619 |
| Maintenance A | | | Maintenance B | | | |
| 4.442 | | .0987 | 2.723 | | .1470 | 34.380 |

In the application of this ratio to all the scales of Sexton-Bowerman, only the Power B scale is not significant in difference (1.761, which is lower than the significace requirement of 1.96 at the 5% level). The conclusion is that there is no direct relationship between the concepts regarding willingness to intervene and actual intervention style. Therefore, H2 is not accepted.

The remaining hypotheses (H3 and H4) are analyzed as a pairing of inverse relationships:

H3 There is a direct relationship between the confidence level (as expressed by respondent opinions regarding adequate training in conflict

management) and the egalitarian style of intervention.

H4 There is a direct relationship between the confidence level (as expressed by respondent opinions regarding inadequate training in conflict management) and the authoritarian style of intervention.

As stated earlier, the adequacy of training factor was included in Tables 21 and 22 in order to present to the observer an additional dimension by which to compare age and experience.

In Table 21, the significances are more conclusive than age and experience factors and the negative correlations tend to indicate support for the inverse concepts that are embodied in H3 and H4.

Additionally, Table 22 reveals a more dramatic clustering at the egalitarian end of the continuum for those respondents who indicated a confidence in their conflict management training. However, since the data also revealed a tendency for inadequately trained respondents to move in this direction, a detailed analysis was undertaken for all crisis situations; this is presented in Table 24.

## TABLE 24

Intervention Style and Adequacy of Conflict Management Training

| | Adequacy | | | | Inadequacy | | | | CR* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Mean | Var. | S.D. | N | Mean | Var. | S.D | |
| | 30 | 4.17 | 1.94 | 1.39 | 69 | 3.84 | 1.55 | 1.25 | 3.30 |
| | 29 | 3.50 | 2.53 | 1.62 | 70 | 2.76 | 3.13 | 1.77 | 8.44 |
| | 30 | 2.43 | 3.11 | 1.76 | 71 | 1.96 | 2.49 | 1.58 | 3.62 |
| | 29 | 3.21 | 2.37 | 1.54 | 71 | 4.25 | 1.63 | 1.28 | -7.43 |
| | 30 | 2.80 | 3.09 | 1.76 | 67 | 2.00 | 2.57 | 1.60 | 6.66 |
| Totals | | 3.23 | 2.61 | 1.61 | | 2.96 | 2.27 | 1.50 | 2.45 |

Summary (scale 1-5, authoritarian-egalitarian):

Adequate CM training mean: 3.23

Inadequate CM training mean: 2.96

* Critical Ratio (standard error of difference: 5% level of significance)

The results reported in Table 24 give support to H3 and H4 in the overall analysis of style versus confidence levels of conflict management training. The grand mean of 3.23 for adequacy as compared with 2.96 for inadequacy reveal that respondents with greater training gravitated toward the egalitarian end of the spectrum, while lesser trained respondents exhibited more authoritarian preferences. In 4 out of 5 conflict situations, this finding is also supported, and with greater ratios than the overall summary. In the single instance of non-significance (item 4, damaging and incorrect information reported to a superior), assistant principals indicated that the intervention style preferred in this case had little relationship to the amount of conflict management training received.

In summary, the findings, presentation, and analysis of data reported in this chapter comprised two phases: (1) the descriptive, wherein assistant principals profiles were aggregated; and (2) hypotheses testing, wherein an empirical investigation allowed for the possibility of establishing statistical conclusions. Both phases are given final consideration and disposition in Chapter Five.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to conduct an assessment of the background, training, and values of all secondary assistant principals in Massachusetts concerning conflict concepts, processes, and preparedness. The data accumulated for this assessment was obtained by means of the questionnaire and Sexton-Bowerman ratings which were described in Chapter Three; the results were examined in Chapter Four. Generally, the questionnaire was designed to present a report of the "state of the art" of conflict management as seen from the operative position of the assistant principalship. Since 72% of all registered principals in the state responded to the survey, the conclusions warrant more than the casual interest that might exist if only a small fraction of the population had participated.

Detailed accumulations of frequency data are reported in Tables 7-10 and in the appendices, but a few summary conclusions are in order here.

Of the 122 administrators answering the survey, only 23 (18.8%) were employed in the capacity of assistant principal for more than 15 years. The greatest block (52; 42.6%) were in the category of between 10 and 14 years. This indicated a fairly high stability of tenure in this

position. Thus, more than 60% of public secondary assistant principals in Massachusetts have occupied their positions for more than 10 years. When contrasted with the item considering permanency of position, a consistency appears to exist wherein there is a relatively high belief (47%) that the appointment should be considered permanent.

Over 90% of the group responding listed ages of 35 or higher. Within this category, 31 (25.4%) were over 50 while 83 (68%) were between 35 and 50. Only 8 (6.0%) respondents were under 35 years of age.

All of the assistant principals possessed a Master's degree or higher, with 83 (68%) in the designation of Master's plus credit hours. Even with this advanced amount of education already earned, 85 (70%) indicated that they would be willing to elect some form of instruction in conflict management. This compares significantly with an overall attitude of dissatisfaction with professional training in conflict management which lists 85 (70%) of the assistant principals as determining their preparation to be lacking. To restate a general conclusion: 2 out of 3 administrators regard their formal instruction in conflict management to be inadequate.

Further, if the opportunity were presented to an assistant principal to design a graduate program in educational administration, 108 (89%) reported that they

would make such a course a requirement. This appears to clearly indicate that there is a necessity for instruction in this area.

Yet it is significant to note that, while assistant principals deal in a variety of conflict situations with a number of different individuals, 98 (80%) do not consider that conflict is inherently harmful to an educational system. Of the number replying (14; 11%) that they consider an inherent harm in conflict, there is no significant breakdown according to age or experience. This is statistically elaborated in Venn diagrams in the appendices. In other words, there is another example existing here which reveals a dispersion of responses.

An area which poses an interesting concept for future research concerns the desirability of a "primer" or handbook in conflict management. Fully 80% of the respondents considered such a reference to be potentially useful. The development of such a reference tool could possibly be used in a pre-test, post-test or independent/control group analysis.

The lack of scientific research instruments in conflict management contributed to the difficulty of generalizing results supporting or rejecting the stated hypotheses. As explained earlier, no instrument was in existence which treated the unique conflict situations encountered in educational administration with the exception on Sexton-

Bowerman. With the dearth of statistical data supporting this measure, an item analysis of internal consistency was conducted by the researcher. The analysis of variance was reported in Chapter Four. Reliability Alpha ratios were concluded to be sufficient for all of the willingness (A) scales. However, the intervention scales (B), which were the subject of major hypotheses, list reliability ratios which barely meet acceptability standards.

Tables 13-20 present an analysis of frequency dispersions in all Sexton-Bowerman scales. A generalization that may be considered from these measures is that while assistant principals register a fairly high level of willingness to intervene (all items are 4+ on the Likert-type scale of 1-5), the actual intervention style is not systematic. Various conflict situations appear to trigger differing response patterns which generally gravitate to the authoritarian end of the continuum. Overall, however, intervention reaction appears to replicate a recognized construct which demonstrates an averaging of behavioral activity around a normal curve concept (Kerlinger, 1978). Thus, an additional conclusion may be drawn that conflict management behavior tends to regress to a middle stage (as represented by Sexton-Bowerman) between the authoritarian and egalitarian mode of resolution.

Regarding hypotheses H1.1 and H1.2 (the greater the age and experience, the greater the correlation with the author-

itarian style of intervention; the lower the age and experience, the greater the correlation with the egalitarian style of intervention), an intra-cell set of matrices was prepared separately for age, experience, and adequacy of conflict management training. Since significant findings were not uncovered categorically (i.e., age breakdown, individual levels of experience, and the positive/negative confidence level regarding training), a compressed crosstabulation was undertaken in order to analyze totals. This was presented and reported in Table 21. Separate Chi Square values with attendant significances were tabulated along with Pearson's correlations, also with significances. While some entries reported significant readings on an individual basis, there was little to suggest categorically that the overall data analysis supported the hypotheses. In other words, the dispersion pattern which ranged over the intervention style continuum and over separate conflict issues appeared to be too diverse in order to specify conclusions regarding distinct categories of age, experience, and educational confidence.

Table 22 in Chapter Four provides a specific example of all variables on a crosstabulation scale. Indeed, inspection of statistical data suggests that neither age or experience is a definitive factor among assistant principals in establishing or predicting actual methodology resolution.

There are, for example, instances where older administrators tend to cluster near the egalitarian end of the Likert scale, while younger respondents are scattered throughout.

The same general conclusion appears to be warranted for adequacy of preparation or training in conflict management. While there is an overwhelming preference for additional instruction in conflict principles and skills, the results of the study could not conclude that the respondents who did indicate that their education was adequate reacted significantly different from individuals who reported inadequate training.

Hypothesis 2 (which attempted to discover a similarity between willingness to intervene and actual intervention style), by virtue of the critical ratio subtests, produced large levels of significance of difference- with the exception of the Power B cell. Since the hypothesis called for the establishing of a direct ratio between willingness to intervene as contrasted with actual intervention style, the hypothesis required rejection. Again, future research may be undertaken in an attempt to investigate possible causal patterns between an expressed tendency to take action with full responsibility and a mode of intervention which tends to be authoritarian.

An analysis of means gleaned from findings in Tables 17, 18, 19, and 20, and summarized in Table 24 tend to support hypotheses 3 and 4. Inadequacy of training in con-

flict management produced an index which regressed towards the authoritarian and of the intervention style continuum, while a higher confidence level in training produced an index which was slightly more directed towards the egalitarian end of the spectrum. However, the difference is marginal to the degree that social scientists may consider definitive findings to be questionable.

The present study uses style preference response to identify related orientations and at the same time to indicate the methodology that the role actor had for a particular situation. The norms and values of the administrator tend to be reflected in personal rationales not readily perceivable by an observer. Identification of particular reasons for specific modes of intervention, therefore, must be achieved with caution since there were statistically significant differences between willingness responses and intervention styles across all issues. Thus, it appears that "issue specificity" could be an intervening variable related to reason response and style of intervention. With this caveat, however, it was observed that risk takers and compromisers generally elected modes of action that could be classified as professional initiative and participative maintenance.

An additional conclusion of the study suggested that Sexton-Bowerman, while acknowledged as the singular instru-

ment in the field, is nevertheless incomplete in terms of serving as a basis for in-depth statistical analysis of the subject. Evidence of this is suggested in the low reliability ratios (as examined by an ANOVA procedure) which served as the foundation for hypotheses based upon intervention style. The specificity of Sexton's conflict situations may have lead to additional variations of attitudes which may possibly be conditioned upon momental circumstances and not upon thoughtful, reasoned analysis. Also, the number of items in each category was limited to 5, and this in itself may have restricted the findings. Another criticism regarding Sexton-Bowerman may be focused on the instructions given for reading and recording responses. Several assistant principals, in submitting the surveys, made comments concerning the vagueness of directions; others commented upon the restrictiveness of presented conflict situations. Three respondents suggested that a limited Likert scale might be inappropriate for determining measurable attitudes regarding style intervention.

Nevertheless, the instrument is a notable beginning in a subject area of educational administration which has been given light treatment by theorists as well as practitioners in the profession. Further researchers in conflict management may which to investigate these present findings, replicate them, expand upon them, and extend them into such domains as conflict situation structure and content as well

as cognitive theory and application.

Also, future researchers may consider a study of this nature which addresses itself to other levels of administrative personnel, such as elementary principals, general supervisors, department heads, or central office staffs. Additionally, the background and preparation of potential respondents could be explored to a greater extent than the present study. Information in this regard may yield data which could suggest new hypotheses linking or relating professional training to adequacy of performance.

In summary, then, a general conclusion reached by the writer is that the present work should be but an initial effort in extending the knowledge of conflict management styles and concepts regarding specific levels of educational administration. As expressed in earlier chapters, an analysis of resolution theories and practices has heretofore not been undertaken on a scale such as the one designed for this writing. Moreover, the literature revealed that studies in general which focus upon the role of the assistant principal are virtually non-existent. While conclusions are possible regarding the results of the present findings, the potential for future research extending the knowledge in the field beyond these findings appears noteworthy.

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# APPENDIX A

## THE INTRODUCTORY LETTER

PEABODY VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL
PEABODY, MASSACHUSETTS 01960
ROY G. FARIA, UNIT DIRECTOR

September, 1981

Dear Colleague:

As assistant principals, I'm sure we share common feelings about the nature of our varied roles as educators.

I am interested in pursuing one such role as it pertains to conflict management. My research will attempt to analyze some perceptions of assistant principals regarding this most important, but often neglected, component of our working world in administration.

Enclosed is a survey containing some questions relevant to conflict management. The first part deals with background data and opinion, and the second section presents a number of conflict situations in which you are asked to respond on a gradual preference rating scale of 1 to 5.

The entire project should only take a few minutes of your time.

I encourage and enlist your support in this endeavor which I feel can be of practical use to all of us. Confidentiality will be respected, and no names or locations will be used in the summary report.

Your comments at the end of the questionnaire are solicited as are your overall criticisms and suggestions.

Please complete both sections and mail to me in the self-enclosed envelope.

Much thanks for your help and cooperation.

Best personal regards,

Roy Faria

Roy Faria
Director, Savageau House
Peabody High School

# APPENDIX B

## THE PERSONAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please underline all responses- (where applicable)

1) Number of years as an assistant principal: (a) more than 15; (b) between 10 and 14; (c) between 5 and 9; (d) under 5

2) The highest earned degree you possess: (a) Bachelor's; (b) Master's; (c) Master's plus credit hours; (d) Doctorate

3) Present age in years: (a) over 50; (b) between 35 and 50; (c) under 35

4) Do you consider the position of assistant principal to be: (a) transitory; (b) permanent

5) The size of your school district: (a) over 5000; (b) between 2500 and 5000; (c) between 1000 and 2500; (d) under 1000

6) Please rank the major sources of conflict with which you deal on a regular basis-on a scale of 1 (highest) to 4 (lowest): (a)____ students; (b)____ parents; (c)_____ teachers; (d)_____ administrators/supervisors

7) Overall, do you feel that in your professional training you received adequate instruction in the area of conflict management: (a) yes; (b) no

8) More particularly, do you feel that your professional preparation adequately laid the foundation for conflict situations which you have encountered with:
   (1) students: (a) yes; (b) no
   (2) parents: (a) yes; (b) no
   (3) teachers: (a) yes; (b) no
   (4) administrators/supervisors: (a) yes; (b) no

9) Do you feel that conflict is inherently harmful to an educational system?
   (a) yes; (b) no; (c) uncertain

10) Were you to design a graduate program in educational administration, would you include a component on conflict management as: (a) an elective; (b) a requirement; (c) no at all

11) At this stage of your career, if you had the opportunity to elect some form of instruction in conflict management, would you do so? (a) yes; (b) no; (c) uncertain

12) If the answer to the previous question is "yes" would you please rank from 1 (highest) to 4 (lowest) the following alternatives:
   (a)____a semester course; (b)____more than a semester course;
   (c)____a workshop; (d)____an inservice course of instruction

13) If a handbook or "primer" in conflict management were to be made available to you, do you feel that you would make use of it for an occasional reference or guide? (a) yes; (b) no; (c) uncertain

# APPENDIX C

## SEXTON-BOWERMAN

## CONFLICT-HANDLING FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

## CONFLICT-HANDLING for EDUCATIONAL LEADERS
### Secondary School Principal and Assistant School Principal Version

INSTRUCTIONS: Each item in the following self-test describes an aspect of administrative behavior as you interact with students and colleagues. Rate each question on both scales by circling the number which best represents your opinion. If you circle 1, this means you have a strong preference for the choice on the left; 5 means you have a strong preference for the choice on the right.

Role Conflict

1. The English teacher comes into your office and claims that the band director is writing too many passes to get students out of the classroom.

| You would: | | Role Conflict | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

2. A student has talked to one of the counselors about a teacher's problems in classroom discipline. The teacher involved has found out and comes to your office to report the problem. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

3. The librarian is complaining that teachers are "dumping their students" in the library and expecting him to assume their workload. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

4. Your secretary is in conflict with one of your faculty over class attendance rosters. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

5. A delegation from student government has come to your office requesting additional candy machines. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

## POWER CONFLICT

6. The football coach is demanding more "release time" for his players from the school day. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

7. Your school is in competition with another school for a new program. In dealing with your superior, you would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

8. Other teachers have complained to you that a certain science teacher is taking the students on too many field trips. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

9. A teacher is not performing his cafeteria duty effectively and you find out it is because he resents the additional appointment. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

10. An organized group in the community demands that a list of books be removed from the school library. You would:

| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## CRISIS CONFLICT

11. A "hot parent" comes in and threatens legal action because his child was assaulted on the school grounds. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

12. There have been a number of unsubstantiated reports that one of your teachers is involving students in homosexual acts. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

13. When one of your good woodshop teachers went to the lounge for a quick cup of coffee a student injured himself seriously. You call in the teacher and you:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

14. You've heard that damaging and incorrect information about your school has been reported to your superior. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

15. You wander onto the practice field and see a coach hitting one of his players. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

## MAINTENANCE CONFLICT

16. You receive a report that the custodian refuses to fix the shades in one of the teacher's rooms. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

17. Your secretary said that a teacher has not turned in his gradebook. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

18. A teacher has called in sick very late for a substitute teacher. This teacher has done this in the past. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

19. A student has requested to the counselor that he be transferred to another section because of a personality conflict with the teacher. There seems to be no discipline problem involved, but this is the third request from that student. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

20. A teacher has complained that your secretary is blocking access to you. You would:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avoid the situation for now; do not intervene | 1 2 3 4 5 | Take action with full responsibility, assume risk | Tell them how to handle the situation | 1 2 3 4 5 | Facilitate discussion; decide by all parties having equal influence |

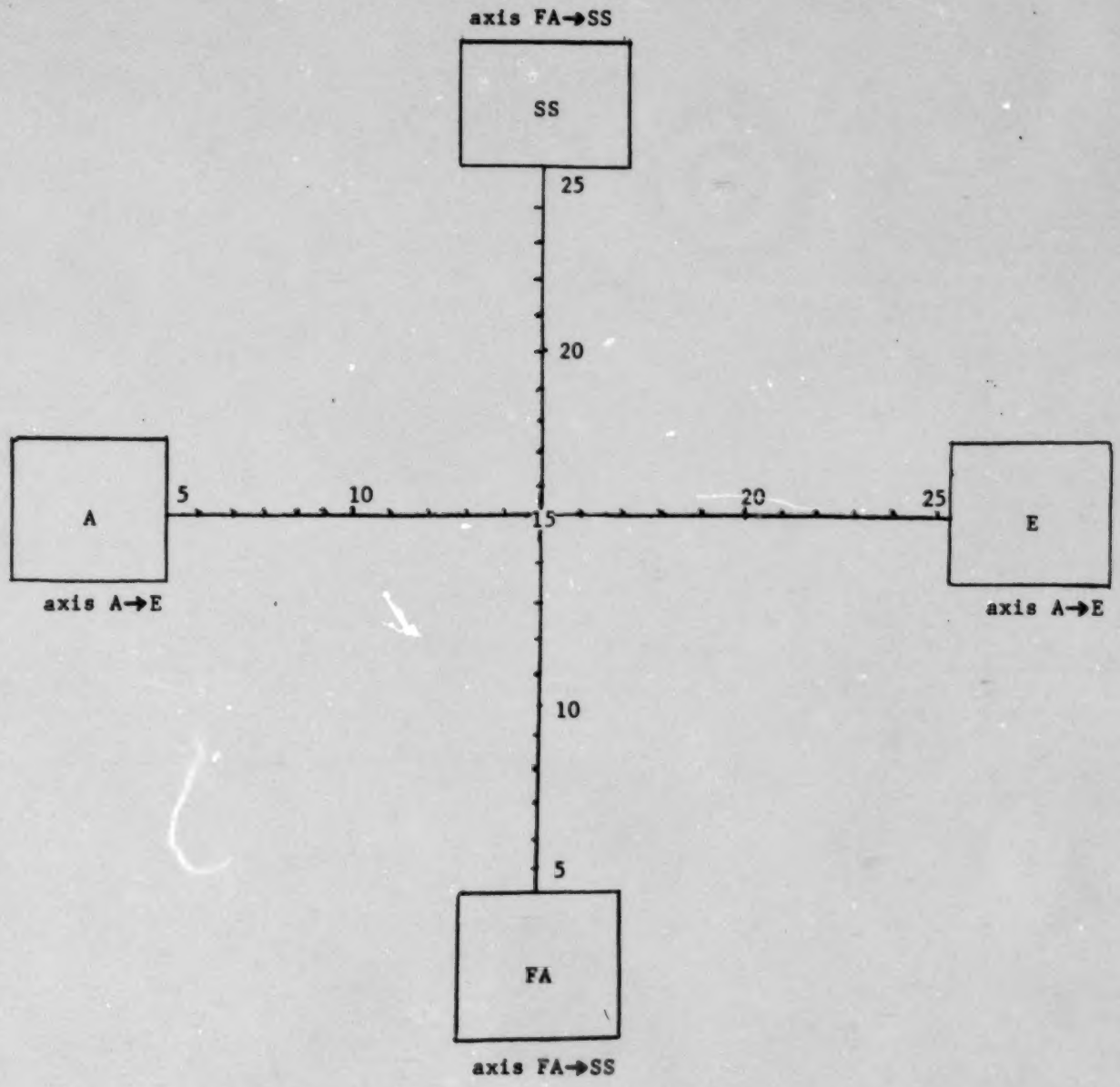
# APPENDIX D

## SEXTON-BOWERMAN

## CONFLICT-HANDLING GRID AND RATING SCALE

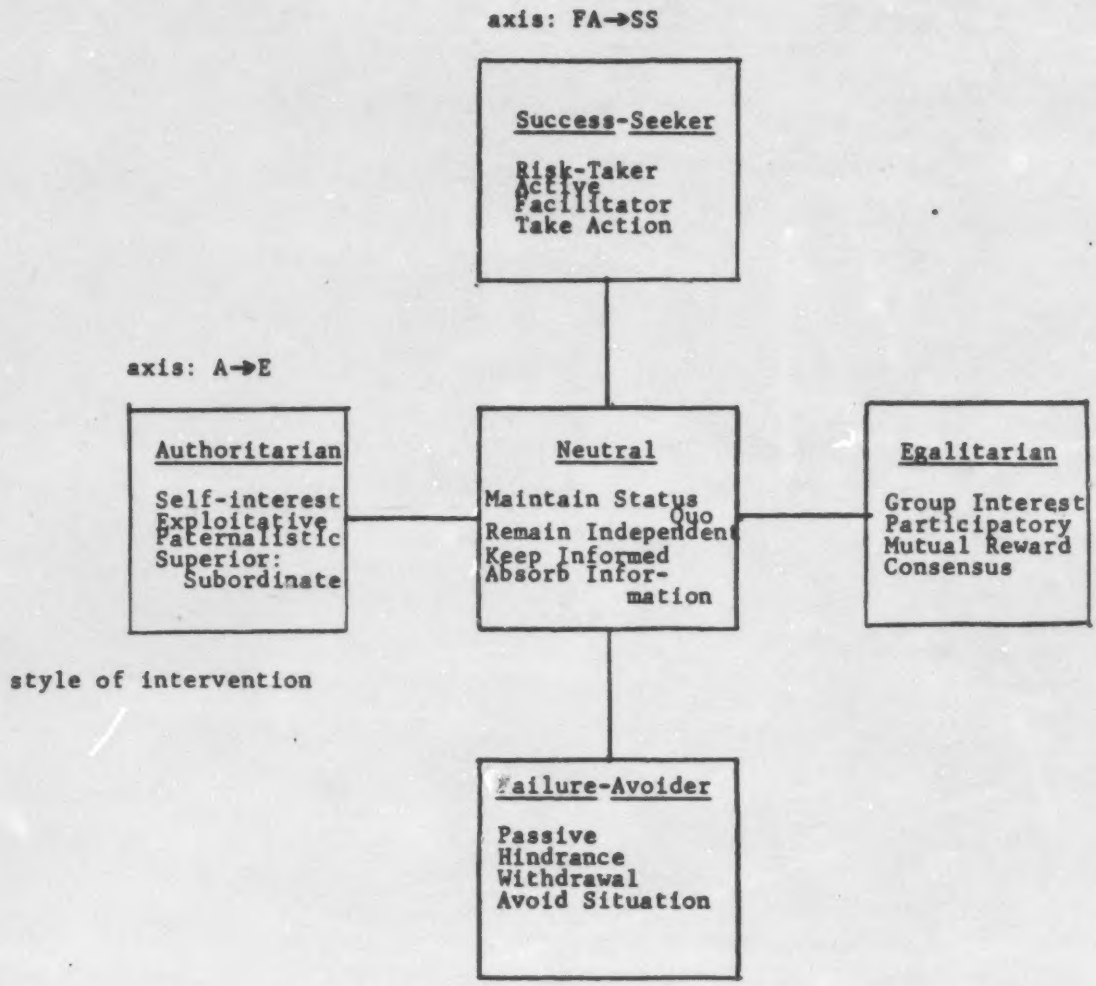
## Conflict Handling Grid

INSTRUCTIONS: look back to the scores you obtained in each of the four areas of conflict. Write the word "role" on both axes (FA→SS and A→E) of the graph below, corresponding to your scores shown at the bottom of the section on role conflict. Then do the same for "power," "crisis," and "maintenance" conflict.




Sexton-Bowerman 1978

## Conflict-Handling for Educational Leaders

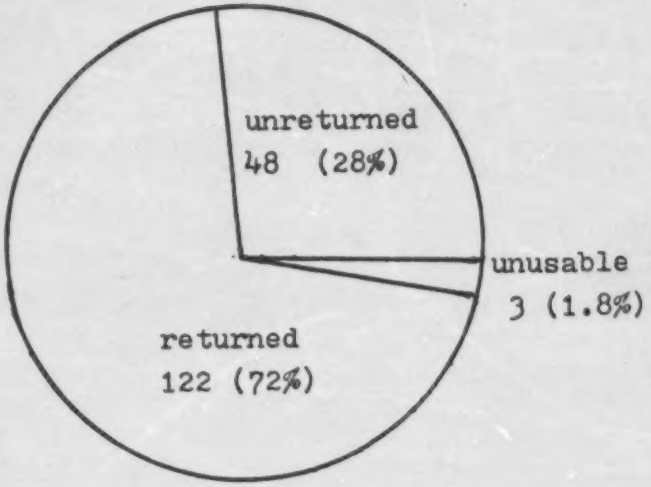



Sexton-Bowerman 1977

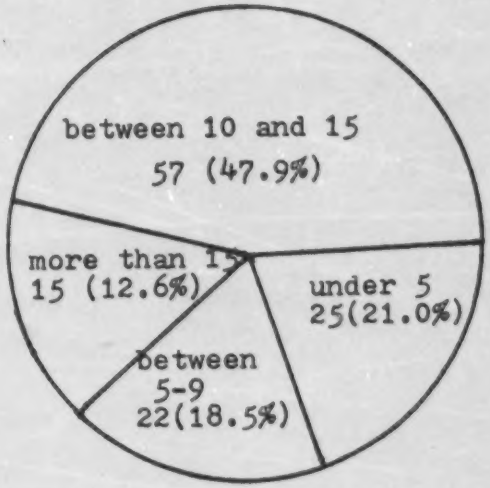
# APPENDIX E

## QUESTIONNAIRE DIAGRAMS

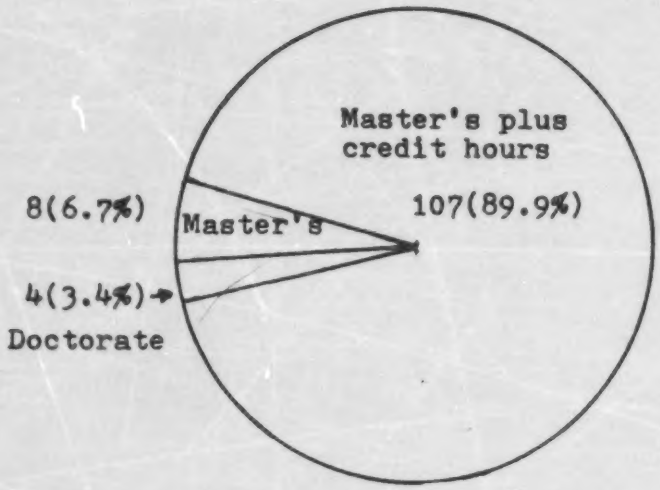
Surveys Returned
(Table 6)




Years As An Assistant Principal
(Table 7)

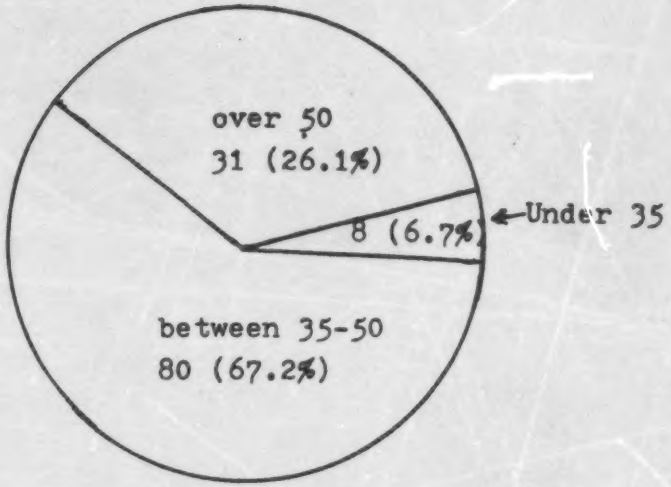


**Highest Earned Degree**
(Table 8)

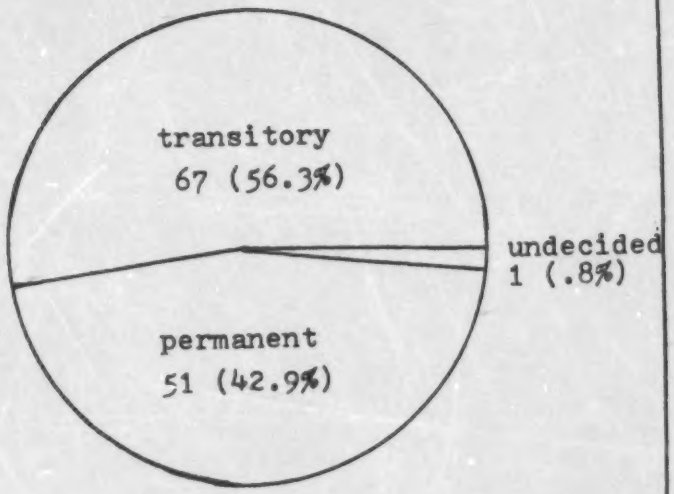





**Present Age in Years**
(Table 9)

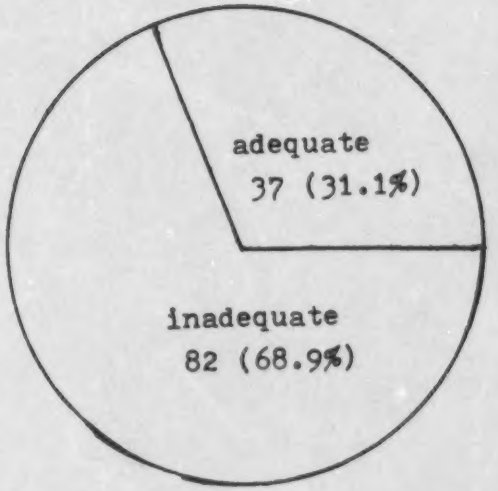


Consideration of Position
(Table 10)

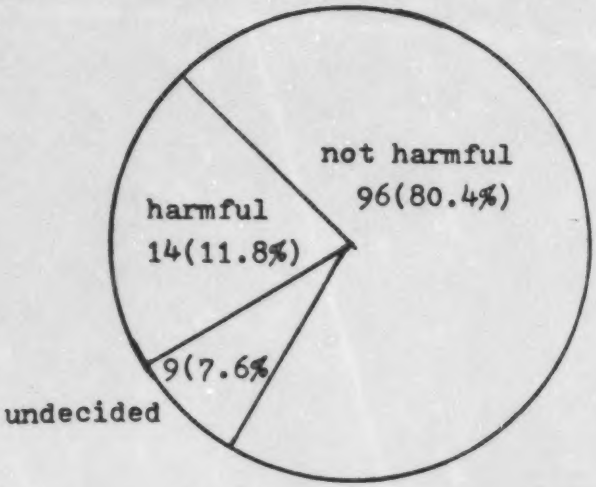




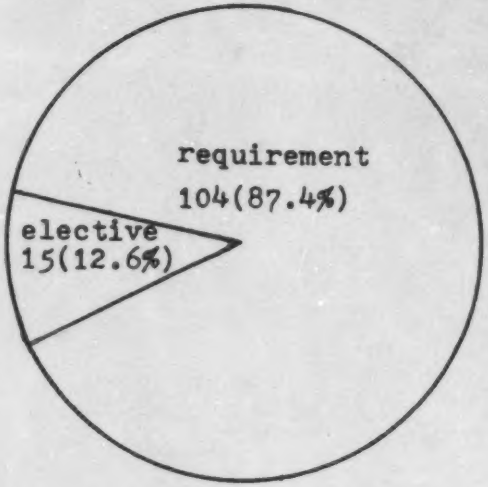

Adequacy of Conflict Management Training



Conflict Harmful?




Would Design CM Program
(a) requirement
(elective)



# APPENDIX F

# ANOVA RELIABILITY ALPHAS

## RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR SCALE (Role A)

Number of Cases =95.0

| Statistics For | Mean | Variance | Std. Dev. | Number Variables |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale | 21.65263 | 16.93124 | 4.11476 | 5 |

| | Mean | Minimum | Maximum | Range | Max/Min | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item Means | 4.33053 | 4.10526 | 4.66316 | 0.55789 | 1.1390 | 0.04801 |
| Item Variances | 1.21035 | 0.75767 | 1.48891 | 0.73124 | 1.96512 | 0.08422 |
| Inter - Item Covariances | 0.54398 | 0.25924 | 0.80011 | 0.54087 | 3.08639 | 0.04013 |
| Inter - Item Correlations | 0.44377 | 0.25043 | 0.59414 | 0.34371 | 2.37249 | 0.01374 |

Analysis of Variance

| Source of Variation | S. S. | D.F. | Mean Square | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between People | 318.30737 | 94 | 3.38625 | | |
| Within People | 268.80001 | 380 | 0.70737 | | |
| Between Measures | 18.24422 | 4 | 4.56105 | 6.84461 | 0.00003 |
| Residual | 250.55579 | 376 | 0.66637 | | |
| Nonaditivity | 11.65773 | 1 | 11.65773 | 18.29923 | 0.00002 |
| Balance | 238.89806 | 375 | 0.63706 | | |
| Total | 587.10737 | 474 | 1.23862 | | |

Grand Mean =4.33053

Hotellings T - Squared= 24.26129 F= 5.87175

Degrees of Freedom **Numerator= 4 Denominator= 91 Probability= 0.00030

Reliability Coefficient 5 Items

Alpha =0.80321 (Standard Item Alpha=0.79956)

## RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR SCALE (Role B)

Number of Cases =94.0

| Statistics For | Mean | Variance | Std. Dev. | Number Variables |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale | 16.77660 | 14.62697 | 3.82452 | 5 |

| | Mean | Minimum | Maximum | Range | Max/Min | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item Means | 3.35532 | 2.74468 | 3.82979 | 1.08511 | 1.39535 | 0.24703 |
| Item Variances | 2.33285 | 1.54255 | 2.90185 | 1.35930 | 1.88120 | 0.25102 |
| Inter - Item Covariances | 0.14814 | -0.61954 | 1.18417 | 1.80371 | -1.91137 | 0.40654 |
| Inter - Item Correlations | 0.07058 | -0.22834 | 0.48561 | 0.71395 | -2.12674 | 0.06696 |

Analysis of Variance

| Source of Variation | S. S. | D.F. | Mean Square | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between People | 272.06170 | 93 | 2.92539 | | |
| Within People | 905.59999 | 376 | 2.40851 | | |
| Between Measures | 92.88510 | 4 | 23.22127 | 10.62896 | 0.00000 |
| Residual | 812.71489 | 372 | 2.18472 | | |
| Nonaditivity | 5.75891 | 1 | 5.75891 | 2.64767 | 0.10455 |
| Balance | 806.95598 | 371 | 2.17508 | | |
| Total | 1177.66169 | 469 | 2.51101 | | |

Grand Mean = 3.35532

Hotellings T - Squared= 52.05570 F= 12.59412

Degrees of Freedom **Numerator= 4 Denominator= 90 Probability= 0.00000

Reliability Coefficient 5 Items

Alpha = 0.25319

## RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR SCALE (Power A)

Number of Cases = 89

| Statistics For | Mean | Variance | Std. Dev. | Number Variables |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale | 21.97753 | 13..04494 | 3.61178 | 5 |

| | Mean | Minimum | Maximum | Range | Max/Min | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item Means | 4.39551 | 4.00000 | 4.83146 | 0.83146 | 1.20787 | 0.14287 |
| Item Variances | 1.11256 | 0.27809 | 2.09091 | 1.81282 | 7.51882 | 0.63170 |
| Inter - Item Covariances | 0.37411 | 0.03971 | 1.00000 | 0.96029 | 25.18328 | 0.10119 |
| Inter - Item Correlations | 0.33905 | 0.06091 | 0.56154 | 0.50063 | 9.21851 | 0.02316 |

Analysis of Variance

| Source of Variation | S. S. | D.F. | Mean Square | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between People | 229.59101 | 88 | 2.60899 | | |
| Within People | 310.80000 | 356 | 0.87303 | | |
| Between Measures | 50.86292 | 4 | 12.71573 | 17.21931 | 0.00000 |
| Residual | 259.93708 | 352 | 0.73846 | | |
| Nonaditivity | 65.44905 | 1 | 65.44905 | 118.11841 | 0.00000 |
| Balance | 194.48803 | 351 | 0.55410 | | |
| Total | 540.39101 | 444 | 1.21710 | | |

Grand Mean =4.39551

Hotellings T - Squared= 48.48683 F= 11.70847

Degrees of Freedom **Numerator= 4 Denominator= 85 Probability= 0.00000

Reliability Coefficient 5 Items

Alpha = 0.71696

## RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR SCALE (Power B)

Number of Cases =87.0

| Statistics For | Mean | Variance | Std. Dev. | Number Variables |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale | 17.20690 | 15.07298 | 3.88239 | 5 |

| | Mean | Minimum | Maximum | Range | Max/Min | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item Means | 3.44138 | 2.14943 | 4.35632 | 2.20690 | 2.02674 | 1.02303 |
| Item Variances | 1.74707 | 1.29511 | 2.75648 | 1.46137 | 2.12838 | 0.37995 |
| Inter - Item Covariances | 0.31688 | -0.12363 | 0.63312 | 0.75675 | -5.12108 | 0.5582 |
| Inter - Item Correlations | 0. 20118 | -0.06358 | 0.47503 | 0.53862 | -7.47113 | 0.02426 |

Analysis of Variance

| Source of Variation | S. S. | D.F. | Mean Square | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between People | 259.25517 | 86 | 3.01460 | | |
| Within People | 848.00000 | 348 | 2.43678 | | |
| Between Measures | 356.01379 | 4 | 89.00345 | 62.23180 | 0.00000 |
| Residual | 491.98621 | 344 | 1.43019 | | |
| Nonaditivity | 4.17089 | 1 | 4.17089 | 2.93270 | 0.08771 |
| Balance | 487.81532 | 343 | 1.42220 | | |
| Total | 1107.25517 | 434 | 2.55128 | | |

Grand Mean 3.44138

Hotellings T - Squared= 155.58770 F= 37.54006

Degrees of Freedom **Numerator= 4 Denominator= 83 Probability= 0.00000

Reliability Coefficient 5 Items

Alpha = 0.52558

150

## RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR SCALE (Crisis A)

Number of Cases =94.0

| Statistics For | Mean | Variance | Std. Dev. | Number Variables |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale | 23.06383 | 8.87760 | 2.97953 | 5 |

| | Mean | Minimum | Maximum | Range | Max/Min | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item Means | 4.61277 | 4.32979 | 4.77660 | 0.44681 | 1.10319 | 0.03478 |
| Item Variances | 0.76225 | 0.44200 | 1.49222 | 1.05022 | 3.37604 | 0.20044 |
| Inter - Item Covariances | 0.25332 | 0.00755 | 0.48307 | 0.47552 | 63.98485 | 0.02195 |
| Inter - Item Correlations | 0.37468 | 0.01148 | 0.81373 | 0.80225 | 70.88383 | 0.05173 |

Analysis of Variance

| Source of Variation | S. S. | D.F. | Mean Square | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between People | 165.12340 | 93 | 1.77552 | | |
| Within People | 202.40000 | 376 | 0.53830 | | |
| Between Measures | 13.07660 | 4 | 3.26915 | 6.42352 | 0.00005 |
| Residual | 189.32340 | 372 | 0.50893 | | |
| Nonaditivity | 11.51758 | 1 | 11.51758 | 24.03196 | 0.00000 |
| Balance | 177.80582 | 371 | 0.47926 | | |
| Total | 367.52340 | 469 | 0.78363 | | |

Grand Mean =4.61277

Hotellings T - Squared= 20.24896 F= 4.89894

Degrees of Freedom **Numerator= 4 Denominator= 90 Probability= 0.00128

Reliability Coefficient 5 Items

Alpha=0.71336

151

168

169

## RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR SCALE (Crisis B)

Number of Cases = 88.0

| Statistics For | Mean | Variance | Std. Dev. | Number Variables |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale | 14.84091 | 24.68704 | 4.96861 | 5 |

| | Mean | Minimum | Maximum | Range | Max/Min | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item Means | 2.96818 | 1.97727 | 3.93182 | 1.95455 | 1.98851 | 0.87561 |
| Item Variances | 2.43527 | 1.71983 | 3.06779 | 1.34796 | 1.78378 | 0.23471 |
| Inter - Item Covariances | 0.62554 | -0.46212 | 1.57680 | 2.03892 | -3.41210 | 0.43636 |
| Inter - Item Correlations | 0.24908 | -0.17968 | 0.60277 | 0.78245 | -3.35473 | 0.05981 |

Analysis of Variance

| Source of Variation | S. S. | D.F. | Mean Square | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between People | 429.55455 | 87 | 4.93741 | | |
| Within People | 938.00000 | 352 | 2.66477 | | |
| Between Measures | 308.21364 | 4 | 77.05341 | 42.57727 | 0.00000 |
| Residual | 629.78636 | 348 | 1.80973 | | |
| Nonaditivity | 41.81572 | 1 | 41.81572 | 24.67820 | 0.00000 |
| Balance | 587.97064 | 347 | 1.69444 | | |
| Total | 1367.55455 | 439 | 3.11516 | | |

Grand Mean =2.96818

Hotellings T - Squared= 153.91070 F= 37.15086

Degrees of Freedom **Numerator= 4 Denominator= 84 Probability= 0.00000

Reliability Coefficient 5 Items

Alpha = 0.63347

## RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR SCALE (Maintenance A)

Number of Cases =93.0

| Statistics For | Mean | Variance | Std. Dev. | Number Variables |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale | 22.05376 | 12.70360 | 3.56421 | 5 |

| | Mean | Minimum | Maximum | Range | Max/Min | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item Means | 4.41075 | 4.09677 | 4.56989 | 0.47312 | 1.11549 | 0.03766 |
| Item Variances | 1.09682 | 0.64259 | 1.61010 | 0.96751 | 2.50564 | 0.12403 |
| Inter - Item Covariances | 0.36097 | 0.12260 | 0.51765 | 0.39504 | 4.22212 | 0.01943 |
| Inter - Item Correlations | 0.32870 | 0.14015 | 0.45773 | 0.31758 | 3.26604 | 0.00952 |

Analysis of Variance

| Source of Variation | S. S. | D.F. | Mean Square | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between People | 233.74624 | 92 | 2.54072 | | |
| Within People | 284.80000 | 372 | 0.76559 | | |
| Between Measures | 14.00860 | 4 | 3.50215 | 4.75935 | 0.00094 |
| Residual | 270.79140 | 368 | 0.73585 | | |
| Nonaditivity | 3.83623 | 1 | 3.83623 | 5.27390 | 0.02221 |
| Balance | 266.95517 | 367 | 0.72740 | | |
| Total | 518.54624 | 464 | 1.11756 | | |

Grand Mean = 4.41075

Hotellings T - Squared= 15.12777 F= 3.65862

Degrees of Freedom **Numerator= 4 Denominator= 89 Probability= 0.00832

Reliability Coefficient 5 Items

Alpha = 0.71038

153

## RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR SCALE (Maintenance B)

Number of Cases =88.0

| Statistics For | Mean | Variance | Std. Dev. | Number Variables |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scale | 13.13636 | 17.54441 | 4.18860 | 5 |

| | Mean | Minimum | Maximum | Range | Max/Min | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item Means | 2.62727 | 1.98864 | 4.13636 | 2.14773 | 2.08000 | 0.74183 |
| Item Variances | 2.05460 | 1.56688 | 2.60188 | 1.03501 | 1.66055 | 0.13730 |
| Inter - Item Covariances | 0.36357 | -0.33177 | 1.18809 | 1.51985 | -3.58110 | 0.29765 |
| Inter - Item Correlations | 0.18010 | -0.16347 | 0.56480 | 0.72828 | -3.45500 | 0.07407 |

Analysis of Variance

| Source of Variation | S. S. | D.F. | Mean Square | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between People | 305.27273 | 87 | 3.50888 | | |
| Within People | 849.60000 | 352 | 2.41364 | | |
| Between Measures | 261.12273 | 4 | 65.28068 | 38.60417 | 0.00000 |
| Residual | 588.47727 | 348 | 1.69103 | | |
| Nonaditivity | 35.43547 | 1 | 35.43547 | 22.23359 | 0.00000 |
| Balance | 553.04181 | 347 | 1.59378 | | |
| Total | 1154.87273 | 439 | 2.63069 | | |

Grand Mean =2.62727

Hotellings T - Squared= 95.45059 F= 23.03980

Degrees of Freedom **Numerator= 4 Denominator= 84 Probability= 0.00000

Reliability Coefficient 5 Items

Alpha =0.51807

154

175

174

# APPENDIX G

## CHI SQUARE, PEARSON CORRELATIONS

## SIGNIFICANCES

## Chi Square and Pearson Correlations: Role Scale

| Situation | Age | Experience | Adequacy |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5.9727 (.6503)<br>-.0079 (.4675) | 30.2882 (.0025)<br>-.1791 (.0319) | 9.6545 (.0467)<br>.14965 (.0611) |
| 2 | 11.4520 (.1774)<br>.01284 (.4468) | 35.0317 (.0005)<br>.0403 (.3374) | 18.2720 (.0011)<br>.15477 (.0524) |
| 3 | 11.6585 (.1671)<br>-.0912 (.1739) | 16.4604 (.1710)<br>-.1165 (.1149) | 8.4157 (.0775)<br>-.1383 (.0768) |
| 4 | 16.0152 (.0422)<br>-.0402 (.3466) | 29.8140 (.0030)<br>-.2891 (.0019) | 18.5159 (.0010)<br>.1493 (.0702) |
| 5 | 19.9015 (.0107)<br>-.1047 (.1370) | 26.1038 (.0104)<br>.1414 (.0694) | 7.9588 (.0931)<br>-.2273 (.0082) |

## Chi Square and Pearson Correlations: Power Scale

| Situation | Age | Experience | Adequacy |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 17.4025 (.262)<br>-.1889 (.0313) | 30.0918 (.0027)<br>-.2552 (.0056) | 8.2451 (.830)<br>.0871 (.1970) |
| 2 | 5.8926 (.6593)<br>-.0004 (.4982) | 15.1033 (.2358)<br>-.0449 (.3214) | 6.0404 (.1961)<br>.2271 (.0088) |
| 3 | 13.2048 (.1050)<br>-.0006 (.4975) | 28.9936 (.0039)<br>-.0386 (.3508) | 6.1884 (.1855)<br>-.0566 (.2871) |
| 4 | 11.4313 (.1784)<br>-.2631 (.0044) | 20.8546 (.0526)<br>.0298 (.3855) | 1.1243 (.8904)<br>.0355 (.3644) |
| 5 | 10.7573 (.2158)<br>.2189 (.0105) | 15.1794 (.2318)<br>.0339 (.3620) | .7491 (.9451)<br>.0543 (.2857) |

## Chi Square and Pearson Correlations: Maintenance Scale

| Situation | Age | | Experience | | Adequacy | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 11.3501 | (.1826) | 19.6813 | (.0734) | 5.8116 | (.2137) |
| | -.2219 | (.0145) | -.0637 | (.2678) | -.2165 | (.0166) |
| 2 | 18.2094 | (.0197) | 23.4054 | (.0245) | 7.6718 | (.1044) |
| | -.2030 | (.0231) | -.1564 | (.0630) | -.1181 | (.1247) |
| 3 | 16.9343 | (.0308) | 34.9716 | (.0005) | 18.2421 | (.0011) |
| | -.2554 | (.0058) | -.2533 | (.0062) | .2108 | (.0191) |
| 4 | 17.4247 | (.0260) | 28.8873 | (.0041) | 4.6597 | (.3240) |
| | .1243 | (.1000) | -.1812 | (.0303) | .0958 | (.1620) |
| 5 | 16.7081 | (.0333) | 20.5795 | (.0569) | 6.0594 | (.1948) |
| | -.2138 | (.0177) | -.0093 | (.4641) | .1896 | (.0314) |